

Sœur Alice-Marie

RUPTURE OU FIDÉLITÉ

1948-1975:

Une congrégation religieuse
dans l'Église ébranlée

Clovis

Sister Alice-Marie

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TERMINATION o FIDELITY

1948 - 1975 :

A religious congregation in the shaken Church

Cover illustration:

Pose in front of St. Peter's Basilica, during the pilgrimage to Rome of the congregation of Saint-Nom-de-Jésus of Toulouse, in 1950 (private collection of the congregation).

Credits for photographs in inner sections: i-xvi, xviii bottom, xix-xxi, xxii bottom, xxiii top, xxiv-xxxii private collection of the congregation xxii top:

Archives of the Dominican Province of Toulouse xvii, xvm top, xxiii middle and bottom: Wikimedia commons

Wâwed. August 2016 B.P. 118 - 92153 Suresnes Cedex Tel. 0145 0698 88 - Fax 0145 06 05 44 www.clovis-dififusion.com ISBN 978-2-35005-132-1

Preface

Sister Alice-Marie, a Dominican teacher and author of this book, has already proven herself by giving the public a history of her institute in 2006, entitled *Histoire de la Congrégation du Saint-Nom-de-Jésus de Toulouse (1800-1953)*. This book is a continuation of that history; it goes from 1948 to 1974. It is written in a perfect, clear and elegant language. The author asked me to preface it. I am very honored because it is a major contribution to the contemporary history of the Church.

In Toulouse, just after the Second World War, three religious congregations ran boarding schools for the instruction of young girls. They were the Ladies of Saint-Maur, who had arrived in Toulouse in the 15th century, the Sacred Heart and the Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus, an institute born just after the Revolution. The Saint-Nom-de-Jésus, which is at the origin of our Dominican teaching sisters of Fanjeaux, counted in 1950 two hundred Sisters and fourteen schools from Bordeaux to Grasse. It is of this third Congregation that Sister Alice-Marie recounts here the history and the tribulations, in the dramatic period of the conciliar crisis. She is an incomparable author. This preface adds nothing to her book. I can only underline the value of this work and, I hope, increase its scope.

1948-1974, twenty-six years, the story is short, but it is often painful. During this period, the Holy Name was persecuted. The Church hierarchy persecuted the Sisters. Those who lived through this ordeal will never forget it.

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The author divides the period into three parts, which are his three parts. The first is entitled "The New Constitutions". The Congregation is reforming. The old constitutions had been approved in 1873. At that time, half of the French still made their Easter. In 1950, only a quarter did. The Congregation reformed itself in 1953 with a view to a more vigorous apostolate and a more Christian teaching. The Superior General, Mother Hélène Jamet, directed the operations. Father Calmel, a Dominican, was her advisor approved by the Holy See. The author paints a vivid portrait of these two strong and engaging personalities. Father Calmel is a Thomist and teaches the philosophy of the Angelic Doctor at the novitiate of the Congregation (in Montréjeau). His Rosary of Our Lady is in the hands of all the Sisters. The common objective of Mother Hélène and her advisor was, according to our author, "to realize the unity of life between the general end of the Congregation (union with God) and its specific end (Christian teaching of young girls)" (p. 13). The new constitutions were adopted in 1953. They infused the Holy Name with an energy and a strength of detachment that marked the Congregation and still marks it today, for they are still in use. However, difficulties arose: fifteen Sisters opposed this and, since the Holy Name was of pontifical right, they appealed to Rome. The Sacred Congregation of Religious postponed the General Chapter scheduled for June 1954 and added to the formula of vows the promise to observe the Rule of St. Augustine. Nothing serious, but that was not all: Father Calmel's ministry to the Congregation was terminated. No reproach was made to him, but it was felt that his departure was necessary for interior "peace". In fact, this departure at the time of the beginning of the conciliar crisis was a cause of weakening.

The second part of the book is entitled "The Congregation from 1954 to 1971: in the conciliar turmoil". The Era of Sorting

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bulations began. The decree of Paul VI, *Perfectæ Caritatis* (1965), and the obligation of the entire Church to *aggiornamento*, caused incalculable disruption. The decree *Perfectæ Caritatis* required all religious institutes to review their constitutions in order to renew their religious life. The Holy Name, although reformed ten years earlier, was subjected to the common rule. *Caggiornamento* was undertaken by Mother Marie-Rose Tassy, elected Superior General in 1961 with the support of Archbishop Garrone of Toulouse. This bishop was a fervent believer in new things. He asked the nuns of his diocese for “a kind of exaltation of apostolic virtuality”. Mother Tassy authorized services in French, allowed television and complied with the ministerial requirements of the school map. For the revision of the constitutions, a questionnaire was sent to each Sister. “What do you think should be changed or eliminated in the Constitutions and in our customs? “The election of Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin to the Generalate (1967) put an end to this questioning. The new Superior was a disciple and friend of Mother Hélène. The great majority of the Sisters saw in her election “a miracle of Providence” (p. 176). She immediately begins to defend herself. She fought for the 1953 Constitutions. She fights to keep the Mass of St. Pius V. She fights against the obligatory fund (the new catechism). It fights in vain against the coalition of the French bishops and the Roman authorities most committed to renewal with the support of the Pope. One example will suffice. In 1970, she obtained from Cardinal Gut, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship, an inducement to continue to celebrate the Tridentine Rite Mass. In 1974, Bishop Bugnini, the author of the new *Ordo Misse*, wrote to Archbishop Collini of Toulouse to deny any value to this so-called *induit* because

of its private character, and the Archbishop hastened to confirm the denial. Mother Anne-Marie is courageous in the extreme; she goes to see the bishops at their home. They took her

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from above, but his retorts strike them down. One of them is wrong to say to him (this is the obligatory fund):

- A little mother general of a little Congregation wants to show off to all the bishops of France... Do you know the sin of pride?

- But, Monsignor, do you read?

- There is also the sin of laziness.

However, the fight is too unequal, and the tension is such that it leads to the rupture. This is the title of the third part: "From tensions to rupture" (1971-1974).

It is the time of the final and unfortunately vain steps. Mother Anne-Marie asks for an apostolic visit. Rome appoints a premonstratensian who makes a mockery of his mission as a visitor and says anything. So Mother Simoulin went to the Apostolic Signatura. It is the supreme tribunal. She awaits justice. She asked for Mass and catechism. Not only did she get nothing, but she was also condemned. She was deposed (May 27, 1974) and replaced by an administrator. All she had to do was to leave, which she did in July 1975 with about twenty Sisters. On June 7, 1976, a new decree: the dissident Sisters were released from their vows. They moved to La Clarté-Dieu, in Fanjeaux. Bishop Puech, bishop of Carcassonne, declared to the press that they were not nuns. The evil is consummated.

These are the summarized facts. The reader will see the details. He will need a strong heart.

Everything has been verified. There is nothing in this book that is not proven. The author has gathered considerable documentation. She did not limit herself to the archives of her Congregation. She also consulted those of the bishoprics. However, her principal source is the Simoulin fonds. Mother Anne-Marie had archived all her mail and copied her own letters. Retired at the house in Romagne, she saw Sister Alice-Marie every day

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and worked with her to reconstruct this history. To the written documents, she added her personal memories. As the author says in a moving preface, “this book owes her a lot”.

We have here an unprecedented study. The history of the Church’s crisis during the conciliar years has never before produced anything like it, nothing so detailed, over a long period of time, the day-by-day story of a religious congregation confronted with this crisis, struggling to remain faithful to its vocation and its constitutions, persecuted incessantly, persecuted to death, one might say, and finally forced to enter into dissidence. From the beginning of the conciliar turmoil to the present day, magazines and bulletins of traditional tendency have often mentioned the names of parish priests who have been dismissed from their functions, of nuns who have been excommunicated, of deceased laymen who have expressed in vain in their last wishes that the Tridentine rite Mass be celebrated at their funerals. But these were almost always isolated cases. Here, for the first time, we have a continuous and detailed account of a quarter century of persecution of a religious institute. It is a landmark work in the historiography of the crisis.

It will be a milestone because of the many facts it reports, but also because of the texts produced, official texts from the authorities and open or private letters. For most of these documents, the author has deemed it necessary, with some exceptions, to insert them entirely in his text. The others are given in the appendix. All are to be read from the first to the last line. The whole forms an unequalled collection,

illustrating the courage of the Sisters and the cruelty or hypocrisy of the persecutors. Some of the letters from the French bishops are damning for their authors. One will read in particular that of Mgr Garrone, archbishop of Toulouse, then cardinal, master in the hypocritical genre. Sister Alice-Marie makes few comments. The document is enough.

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The admirable thing is that Mother Anne-Marie's institute has survived so many trials. On August 5, 2015, it celebrated 40 years since its establishment in Fanjeaux. It is the new Holy Name. It is called the Congregation of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus of Fanjeaux. Its constitutions are still those of 1953. It flourished. Immediately vocations and students flocked. Today, with its two hundred Sisters and numerous schools in France and the United States, it is one of the largest and most renowned teaching congregations of women.

Say that and you will immediately be objected: they are not in the Church; they are not nuns, having been released from their vows. Sister Alice-Marie replies. In her chapter of the third part, entitled "Reflections on the Canonical Scope of Roman Interventions", she proves that the vows of the Sisters remain valid. The inducement to remove them cannot have any effect, cannot secularize them. For the Sisters did not ask for it, and there can be no effect without a request from those concerned. The inducement has no canonical effect. All the canonists consulted agree on this. It is therefore an injustice and, on the part of the Sacred Congregation of Religious, a grave fault. The Sisters had asked for what they had the right to ask for. The only answer was to expel them. This seems to me to be without precedent. Has the Holy Roman Church ever persecuted and proscribed its best faithful? The Jansenists were persecuted,

and there were holy people among them, but on grace and on the effects of original sin, the doctrines of Jansenius and Saint-Cyran were suspect, and they never wanted to admit it. The only precedent for this would be the sanctions imposed in 1926 by Pius XI and the French bishops on readers of Action Française who refused to unsubscribe. Cruel punishment. Most of these subscribers were Catholics of exemplary piety. However, they were forbidden to receive communion and, in confession, were refused absolution.

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The Church was undoubtedly entitled to reproach Maurras for some of his writings impregnated with paganism, and even to judge his nationalism excessive, but to make his readers pay so dearly for his faults was extremely unjust. This persecution is not so far back; it is not useless to recall it. Already evil had crept into the heart of the Church. Today the crisis of the Church continues. But the Sisters of Fanjeaux were warned and prepared. Father Calmel taught them this prayer to the Virgin: "Virgin Mary, please obtain for us a firm belief in the victory of your Son, so that the daily need to fight, to resist and to mortify ourselves, will not take away our courage. On the contrary, obtain for us the ability to fight with an alert and fearless heart. "This is the prayer of the times to come.

Jean de Viguerie

Dedication

t In memory of Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin, to whom this book owes much,

“[...] of Mother Anne-Marie, the builder: arriving in July [in Fanjeaux], it was necessary to return in September, and this was then repeated in each of the foundations;

“She was a teacher, as she was until her last breath, an awakener of the spirits of the children (and of the Sisters), distressed when she did not meet with an echo, but vehement in transmitting her love of the truth. It was undoubtedly this vehemence that characterized her], this vehemence in fidelity to religious life in its totality, to authentic and integral faith. Listening to her, nothing was impossible: no more to move a house in one day than to set up a new one in a few weeks, no more to resist the bishops than to accept children in difficulty, no more to live without money than to embark on the most expensive projects. Vehemence sometimes ruffled for those who lived with her or who, knowing her little, found themselves shaken without preparation *. “

...of Mother Anne-Marie to whom we address these words taken from the tribute that was paid to her on August 5, 2015, on the occasion of the

1 - Intervention by Mother Marie-Geneviève Rivière, Prioress General of the Congregation, in August 2015.

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40 years of the installation in Fanjeaux of the Congregation of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus of

Fanjeaux:

“Dear Mother, how can we imagine that you will be able to rest in your eternity? Assuring you of this prayer full of gratitude that we continue to raise for you to Heaven, we are confident that you do not cease to importune for your Sisters, so lonely as a result of your absence, all those around you are likely to keep us in fidelity to all that you have fought so hard for 2 .”

Introduction

In August 2015, a branch detached from the main trunk of the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus in Toulouse is celebrating its forty years of existence. In the midst of a major crisis that has shaken the Church for decades, it presents a growth curve opposite to that of the majority of French women's congregations: regularly, the vocations it receives do not come from the Third World, but from European countries and essentially from France, as well as the United States. Its own charism - Catholic teaching and education - unfolded in the context of the secularization of France and in the process of assimilation of private schools by the National Education. The modalities of religious life that it practiced were not those of most of the current women's congregations: the liturgy to which it was exclusively attached took on the traditional form that dated back to the codifications of the Council of Trent. Its religious asceticism includes the wearing of a habit that has not changed since 1950, the limited use of modern means of communication, and, in a more profound way, the voluntary choice of silence, study and penance.

It is the history of this anachronism that these pages would like to retrace, trying to bring to light the milestones of a surprising evolution: from the Institute of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, founded in 1800 as one of the four hundred new religious congregations of women born of the French Revolution, to this Dominican branch of the Congregation of the

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What is the main theme of the study of St. Name of Jesus in Fanjue land? If the framework of the present study extends from 1948 to 1975, it presupposes knowledge of the history of the one hundred and fifty years that preceded it.

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To answer this question, we wanted to write the following pages, not in the manner of a simple historical account, but as a reflection on the causes of the events, on their sequence and on their link with the past of the Congregation.

As we leafed through the documents, it became clear to us that, from 1948 to 1974, three main stages could illustrate the history of the Congregation: the reform of the Constitutions led by Mother Hélène Jamet and Father Calmel, the sudden change in the orientation of the Congregation linked to the election of Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin as Superior General, and the separation of two successive groups of Sisters who left the Congregation while affirming that they still belonged to it at heart.

These three events, spread over several years and prepared by other facts of lesser importance, represented, each to a varied degree, a rupture. But each time too, in the parties that were formed, the opponents claimed continuity. So there is a reflection to be made: to what past of the Congregation do we want to refer? Is there an external rupture that would be the result of a deeper attachment to the past than the material facts would indicate?

The reflection in these pages is based on the historical data that a preliminary study of the history of the Congregation from its origins could offer. From 1800 to 1950, what were

the constitutive elements of the Congregation that, beyond the external circumstances, gave it its soul and its spirit?

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In order to offer more clarity to the rest of our study, we therefore present here very briefly the main milestones of this history, from 1800 to 1954.

The beginnings of the Congregation

The story of the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus began in a village in the Haute-Garonne region of France with the birth of a young boy, François Vincens, in 1756. His parents were very poor. Like many children of that time, he experienced hardship: the death of his parents, poverty. But like all the fervent Catholics of his time, he thought he would touch with his finger the extreme closeness of God who always leans over his children at the very moment of their greatest difficulties. Instructed by the parish priest of his village, he realized on March 16, 1782 the dream of his youth: to be a priest.

However, in Paris, and soon throughout France, the revolution was spreading: the Constituent Assembly reorganized the religious structure of the country. On July 12, 1790, the civil constitution of the clergy was voted, the clergy was transformed into a body of salaried civil servants. The diocese of Toulouse was not spared by this revolutionary tumult. Its clergy was divided: a minority accepted the reform while the rest waited for the pontifical decision. When the pontiff's decision came on April 13, 1791 - a strong condemnation of the civil constitution of the clergy by Pope Pius VI - the majority of the priests in the diocese had already made their decision. In Toulouse, as elsewhere in France, the era of resistance by refractory priests had

begun. A large number of them expatriated to Spain, a Catholic land, in order to keep their faith.

Among them, Father Vincens. Until July 1800, he protected what he considered a treasure, his faith and his priestly ministry, at the cost of this exile, in the painful circumstances of expatriation.

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The hour of his return came in December 1799: a little-known decree of the prefecture opened the door of the diocese to priests who had refused to take the oath. Even before the bells of the concordat, Abbé Vincens was back in the city of Toulouse, terribly moved by the poverty, misery and freedom of morals that the Revolution had spread throughout France. It seems that the sight of the work to be done increased his strength tenfold, for the archives of Haute-Garonne preserve traces of his intense charitable activity in a multitude of places. He would later write to the Sisters of the Congregation he was to found, that is, to the Sisters of the Congregation we want to speak of:

Be careful to do everything with good grace and even with joy.

Don't make the good Lord buy what you do. You are too happy that your services can be pleasing to him... Try not to breathe unless it is to please him.

The faith of Mr. Vincens, defended by the sacrifice of exile in the heart of the Spanish land, was thus prolonged by the vigor with which he devoted himself to charitable works upon his return. In the city of Toulouse, he met a young girl, a former nun of the Congregation of Saint-Maur, whom the Revolution had driven from her convent. Stripped of her religious habit, hunted by the revolutionaries, she had

hidden from house to house during the years of the Terror, seeking in the midst of the ordeal to protect her teaching vocation by bringing here and there to the young children she met some elements of religious instruction. Animated by a faith and a generosity similar to those of Father Vincens, she did not take long to appreciate him, to confide in him, to ask for his help. Her name was Rose de Séverat. A few months later, three other girls joined her. Under the direction of Father Vincens, they founded the Institute of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, whose goal was to “engrave the name of Jesus in the heart of the child.

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The first biographer of the founders of the Congregation would later write:

It is from the knowledge and understanding of this love of predilection of Christ for the little ones that all the works applied to the religious formation of children were born. The work of the Holy Name of Jesus had no other origin 1 .

However, France, somewhat recovered from the revolutionary turmoil, found under the authority of kings Louis XVIII and Charles X a semblance of inner peace. Taking advantage of this relative lull, the religious congregations of women, emerging from the catacombs where the laws of the Revolution had placed them, asked the government for official recognition. Thus, on January 17, 1827, a royal order of Charles X announced that

the Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus established in Toulouse, department of Haute-Garonne, governed by Superiors General, [were] definitively authorized, on condition that they conform to their statutes annexed hereto.

The Congregation was established to last.

From this first stage in the history of the Congregation, it is possible to note the motives which led Abbé Vincens and Rose de Séverat to found an institute: each on his side had wanted to defend the faith of his childhood. Each on his side had wanted to transmit it to the children of Toulouse first, and then to those of the surrounding area. This priority, no doubt linked to difficult political circumstances, relegated to the shadows, at first, the concern for a canonical form of religious life, and the observances imposed on the first Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary were reduced to a minimum.

1 - Father Cathala, L'institut des Saints-Noms-de-Jésus-et-de-Marie, Brussels, 1933, before

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affiliation to the Order and survival of the laws of 1901

Another aspect of the Congregation is revealed when the historian projects himself a few years later and studies the events marked by the personality of Mother Hélène Daguzan, that is, in the last quarter of the 19th century.

The Congregation had grown, it had developed, it had founded establishments throughout the south of France. But vocations were beginning to dry up, and the Superior General at the time, Mother Hélène Daguzan, was worried about her future. She then met with two Dominican fathers with whom she conceived the project of affiliating the Institute of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary with the Order of Preachers. The initiator of this fusion was Father Coconnier whose very simple preaching had immediately pleased Mother Helene. He recommended that she read three books:

the Bible, Saint Thomas, Dante. The Bible, the book of God, - St. Thomas, whose works are the best commentary on the Bible, - Dante, who formulated in wonderful poetry the theology of St. Thomas. With this, a cell, a simple bed, a wooden table and a jug of water: this is enough - with the essential which is the holy sacrifice of the mass for a holy and happy life.

Supporting Mother Hélène's efforts, he obtained from the Father Provincial of the time, Father Cormier, the affiliation of the Sisters to the Dominican Order, and took on the task of forming the Sisters in the spirit of the Order which he defined as

a delicious mixture of simplicity and distinction, of ardent faith and apostolic zeal, making one love all that is truth and light, and hate all that is error and falsity.

We find in this exhortation the elements that had determined Father Vincens and Rose de Séverat to found the institute: the attachment to the Catholic faith and the concern to transmit it. But the affiliation also included the establishment of very precise constitutions. Father Cormier had made his ac

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cord of the strict observance of all Dominican religious customs.

The affiliation ceremony was set for December 8, 1885. In 1894, a decree of Pope Leo XIII approved and confirmed the pious society of the Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus of the Third Order of Saint Dominic. From these events, the Congregation drew two new characteristics: the concern for an exemplary practice of the Constitutions and a particular attachment to the Holy See, since it was henceforth

recognized as a Congregation of pontifical right like the entire Dominican Order.

With the astonishing expansion of the now Dominican congregation, the story of the strong bond that would unite the Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus to Rome and to the popes at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century began.

This link was first of all a general one: he had Mother Helene scrupulously adopt the pontifical directives. This might seem normal. But this was a great strength for the Congregation: the other religious institutes depended on the local Ordinary.

This link was also personal since it included an exchange of correspondence between Pope St. Pius X and the Sisters of the Congregation.

Beginning in 1880, the Third Republic engaged in what historians have called the School War. What happened to the Congregation? Since 1885, it had been affiliated with the Dominican Order. In the years that followed, the number of postulants increased from one or two to ten and even nineteen in a busy year.

1901: the Congregation was thus in full expansion. But the Third Republic began to pronounce laws of dissolution and then of expulsion of religious congregations. As the months went by, the attitude of the Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus towards the State reflected the pontifical directives in a precise manner.

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On July 1, 1901, the law of associations was promulgated. At the beginning of 1903, a commissioner of the Republic came

to close the school of Saint-Nom-de-Jésus of Vic-en-Bigorre, then that of Cazère.

In France, the long exile of the Congregations has begun. The question of their survival was raised.

At the beginning of February 1905, in an office in Toulouse, the prefect of Haute-Garonne signed the decree of expulsion of the Sisters' motherhouse. When asked by the Congregation what to do: exile or secularization, Pope Pius X gave them the answer that would guide them for the years to come: The souls of the little children of France are well worth the heroic sacrifices made on their behalf 2 .

This last word takes up in a clear way the major concerns of the Congregation: the faith of the children and the concern for religious observances, while at the same time recalling the attachment of the Sisters to the directives of the Supreme Pontiff.

The secularization of the Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus, experienced by all as a sacrifice offered to the children of France, paradoxically opened for the Congregation an era of fifty years of growth and expansion, intimately linked to the life of the Church. After a few years of discreet activity under their black secular vestments, which deceived no one, the Sisters gradually resumed their official activity. It was then like a culmination of the Congregation.

The hours of glory

The historical context of the time was that of the concordat signed with Spain in 1851, a concordat whose terms are found in the 1929 treaty with Italy. For all, the Church had the character of a "perfect society", even if the term

- Ibid, p. 64.

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The same idea is found only in the concordat with Spain. From this very precise idea of the Church, linked to the affirmation of the temporal and spiritual kingship of Christ, practical consequences follow: the Catholic cult alone receives the suffrages of the Church, the popes claim the right to impose the laws of the Church in civil society, and especially the conformity of teaching with Catholic doctrine, and the right of the bishops to exercise a role of vigilance in this regard.

It is easy to find, in the very text of the Constitutions of the Institute of the Holy Name of Jesus, the mark of those years that could be called doctrinal, when the official teaching of the pontiffs, spread throughout the universal Church, was a constant exhortation to a certain adherence of the mind to the revealed truths and to the multisecular tradition of the Magisterium. On the occasion of the canonization of Pope St. Pius X, Mother Hélène Jamet herself emphasized the attachment of the Congregation to the directives of the popes and the obvious repercussions of these directives in the new constitutions:

I see the canonization of Blessed Pope Pius X coming with great joy," she wrote. In addition to the gratitude owed to him by the whole Church, we have with him, socially and as a Congregation, numerous and solid bonds of gratitude and affection.

In the light of the pontificates of St. Pius X, Benedict XV, Pius XI and especially Pius XII, the Congregation reached a peak in the 1950's that must not be forgotten if we are to recall its history from 1954 to 1975.

In 1950, the Congregation spread throughout the south of France, from Bordeaux to Grasse. It had nearly two hundred nuns. It has founded more than fourteen schools. It shelters its novices in a splendid novitiate, surrounded by the memory of

3 - Archives of the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus of Fanjeaux: Circular letters of Mother Hélène Jamet, May 5, 1954.

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holy religious. It had just received from Pope Pius XII the approval of its new constitutions, written jointly by Father Calmel and Mother Hélène Jamet, and whose beauty and depth the pope had praised. The Congregation hurried to Rome with its students to see the figure of Pope Pius XII pass by during the pilgrimage it undertook for the jubilee of the Holy Year in 1950...

Such an extraordinary climax was to be short-lived, however. The opening of the Second Vatican Council on October 11, 1962, gave this period its dominant note. Until its closing on December 8, 1965, the Council reflected the life of Catholics throughout the world. As so many historians have shown, the Council wanted to set the Church on a new path - that of dialogue with the modern world.

Religious congregations were faced with unprecedented choices. A new society to which the Church wanted to give new answers profoundly upset the traditional conceptions of religious life, of Catholic teaching, of relationships with the world. The Holy Name of Jesus could not remain aloof from the reflections that these upheavals were generating. Its members wrote the history of the Congregation in what is now called the "crisis of the Church".

This is where the events we are about to relate take place.

Breakup or loyalty? We must let them speak.

PART I

1948 - 1954 :

THE NEW CONSTITUTIONS

Introduction

These things are amazing. Sir, these things! What incredible things will appear to our good Frenchman", wrote the abbot, the last prior of the last Dominican convent in Paris, at the dawn of the French Revolution and the day after the storming of the Bastille, on July 21, 1789. He continued:

The Revolution, announced for a long time by the politicians, desired by 22 million men out of the 24 or 25 who populate France, has just taken place in four and a half days at the most.

I believe it to be truly consolidated, this Revolution which, without changing the essential face of government, will nevertheless subtract from it and add to it so many things that we will almost no longer be the French of past centuries and especially of this one. A similar astonishment could well seize the historian of the Church who bends over the few years which followed the Second World War. What astonishing things the testimonies of the Catholics of that time offer to his study!

A curious walk through the novitiates and seminaries of the immediate post-war period, for example, opens up vast perspectives for reflection.

In 1941, the young Louis Bouyer, on the threshold of his religious vocation, discovered the Oratory of Juilly. He entered it to begin

1 - Father Marie-Dominique Chapotin, o.p.. Le dernier prieur du dernier couvent. 17361806, Paris, Picard, 1893, p. 242.

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his novitiate and analyzes the situation of his Order. In memoirs written later, he recalls his impressions: The more I became familiar with this new milieu, the more I was struck by the fact that the best elements of the generation before mine, like Father Brillet, seemed never to have recovered from the savage repression of modernism.

Under the shelter of a conformism that was half surface and half sincere, like a kind of family loyalty, they had made a little religion of their own in Catholicism, combining with a kind of moral stoicism an evangelism in which the fervent love of Christ overcame a certain vagueness of belief only with a great deal of emotionalism 2 .

Further on, he writes:

I will speak as little as possible about my novitiate, because, although it was not positively painful, it was in many respects the most absurd year of my entire existence 3 .

Another echo comes from the Roman hills where the future abbot Giacomo Martina began his studies of

Religious life, in the immediate post-war period, consisted essentially in safeguarding and transmitting intact fundamental values, such as a total consecration to the Lord, a remarkable austerity, an intense and personal prayer life, a sincere and authentic fidelity to the Church, a spirit of service far removed from any careerism, an ardent pastoral zeal, a robust culture, above all, although not exclusively, philosophical-theological, but at the same time open to other aspects. We remember with sympathy and gratitude the various superiors and teachers of those years of our priestly youth, who, despite all their limitations, contributed to building in all of us the evangelical dwelling founded on rock, capable of withstanding the winds and storms...

But a few lines later, the author qualifies his statement:

Louis Bouyer, *Memoirs*, Cerf, 2014, p. 116. Ibid, p. 121.

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It cannot be denied, however, that these values were rarely presented with the historical coating. No distinction was ever made between value and historical coating, and any criticism, however slight, of the coating was considered an attack on the value, and therefore immediately rejected with authority and without proper discussion.⁴

These astonishing remarks seem to underline, each in his own way, differences of opinion on the formation of novices or future priests, oppositions - open or hidden - between their aspirations and the habits of seminaries or novitiates. The historian does not find in the words of these aspirants to the priesthood or to the religious life the fervor that the disciples of Dom Chautard, the young readers of *L'âme de tout apostolat*, or those who were enthusiastic about the canonizations of the Curé d'Ars and Saint Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus at the dawn of the 20th century, knew.⁵ He searches in vain for the words of these aspirants. He looks in vain for the love of religious life taught from the entrance to the novitiate that some monks let appear in their writings:

Truly," wrote the Cistercian Father Jerome, "my soul was made to adhere to this conception of human life, oriented towards infinitely true and valid goals: God, absolute master of all creatures; God who calls man on the path of salvation; God who gives his servant, already during the journey, his divine friendship and his faith in him; God who will be immense and eternal reward. And this vast journey towards God is stimulated by that very original vow of conversion of morals by which Saint Benedict makes us commit ourselves never to admit spiritual laziness ⁶ ...

Or the dazzle of the novitiate:

4 - Giacomo Marcina, "The historical context in which the idea of a new ecumenical council arose", in René Latourelle (under the direction of), Vatican II. bilan et perspectives. Cerf Bellarmin, 1988, p. 81.

5 - Cf. Paul Vigneron, Histoire des crises du clergé français contemporain, I et II. Téqui, Paris, 1976.

6 - Anne Bernier, in Père Jérôme, Paris, Cerf, 2015, p. 207.

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A world that is different and that asserts itself to be different through observances, even if these are painful at first. The more strongly a young man is attracted to God, the more he expects and desires this break, whatever the price. He is therefore favorably surprised to see by what simple means our Ancients knew how to mark this break and create a different world. Indeed, where else but in a monastery of honest observance can one see eighty conscious and serious men bowing respectfully to the head as soon as the names of their God and the holy Mother of their God touch their ears? How, then, to mark the rupture in a less aggressive and more elegant way? The great effects obtained by small means, is it not the supreme art?

Nor does the historian find the respect and admiration for the masters that the aspirants of the beginning of the century had shown:

What an encouragement, indeed, to see the friends of God so numerous during the last centuries, and so close to us in so many of their trials, feelings and hopes; friends of God scattered all over the cloisters and the world, like maquis masters in the art of not attracting attention, and yet all

together forming for the reign of our great God an orderly and effective force. Yes, indeed, all these good counselors aroused in our hearts a great confidence in the grace of God
8 .

Two examples are certainly not enough to establish a thesis. But many authors have worked, with the help of figures and precise data, on these years during which the Church was, in the words of Emile Poulat, “a shaken Church in a shaken world”. Their work has identified the many private and public documents that can be used to document the tremendous transformation that took place within Catholicism from Leo XIII to the second millennium.

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xth Vatican Council. It is not my intention here to repeat this demonstration, to retrace the historical and political context that led the Church, in a few decades, from a status of intransigence in the face of the modern world stigmatized by the Syllabus, to a phase of “coexistence and dialogue” with contemporary society. This work has already been accomplished.

Rather, through the study of a specific Congregation, that of the Holy Name of Jesus of Toulouse, it is a question of undertaking a reflection on the nature of the changes proposed to Catholics, and particularly to religious institutions, on their causes and their methods. It is easier to affirm this change than to determine its scope... This study is difficult. The history of the Church, in fact, based on the tradition of an unchanging doctrine in its dogmas, also shows what theologians call the homogeneous development of dogma. The study of the upheavals that occurred in the 20th century must therefore take into account two elements: immutability and development. Émile Poulat deplored the absence of a treatise on religious change which,

articulated on the invariants which Catholic Tradition has always claimed, would explain] either how one continues to respect them in the vast upheaval underway, or how one can remain in this Tradition by renouncing them. This question was particularly crucial for the religious institutes which the Congress of Major Superiors of September 15, 1952, in Rome, had launched in the adventure of a reform. It seems appropriate to reread here, before going further into the history of one of these institutes, the words that Pope Pius XII addressed to the superiors at that time:

Yes, dearest Daughters, the echoes of the Congress that has just ended have proclaimed how seriously you take the

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service of God and how much you want to spend for your religious families and for the Church. To this end, you wish to hear from Us a word of consolation, encouragement, and some guidelines.

11 just one year ago. We dealt in detail with a series of questions which concern the good state of the Orders and Congregations of religious educators and their proper adaptation to the present situation. A certain number, if not most of the indications we gave then, are also valid for all other congregations of religious. The experiences of the past year invite Us to draw your attention to the directives We formulated at that time. We ask you to follow them courageously when your Sisters and your own experience tell you that the time has come to take intelligent account of present life forms.

We have a very special reason for speaking to you in this way. You know that women's orders are going through a rather serious crisis: we mean the decrease in the number of vocations. This crisis has certainly not yet reached all countries. Even where it does exist, its intensity is not equal everywhere. But already now, in a number of European countries, it is worrying. In a region where, twenty years ago, women's religious life was flourishing, the number of vocations has dropped by half. And yet, in the past, serious difficulties hindered the vocation of young women, whereas in our time, external conditions seem to push it forward and one would think that one should be on guard against fictitious vocations.

We do not want to deal in detail with this crisis which is causing Us heavy worries. Another circumstance will provide Us with the opportunity. Today, We wish only to address ourselves to those who, whether priests or laymen, preachers, orators or writers, no longer have a word of approval or praise for the virginity vowed to Christ; who for years, in spite of the warnings of the Church and contrary to her thought, have been giving marriage a principled preference over virginity; who go so far as to present it as the only means capable of assuring to the human personality its natural development and perfection. Those who speak and write

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Thus, they become aware of their responsibility before God and before the Church. They must be counted among the principal culprits of a fact about which We can only speak to you with sadness: while, in the Christian world and even everywhere else, appeals to Catholic Sisters are resounding today more than ever, we see ourselves reluctantly forced to give a negative response to them; we are even forced at times to abandon old works, hospitals and educational establishments - all because vocations are not sufficient to meet the needs.

For yourselves, here are Our recommendations: in this vocational crisis, see to it that the customs, the way of life or the asceticism of your religious families are not a barrier or a cause of failure. We are talking about certain customs which, if they once made sense in another cultural context, do not make sense today, and in which a truly good and courageous young woman would only find obstacles to her vocation. In Our talk last year, We gave different examples of this. To return in a word to the question of clothing: the religious habit must always express the consecration to Christ; this is what all expect and desire. As for the rest, let the habit be suitable and meet the requirements of hygiene. We could not but express our satisfaction when, in the course of the year, we saw that one or other Congregation had already drawn some practical conclusions in this regard. In short, in those things which are not essential, adapt yourselves as much as reason and well-ordered charity advise you 10 .

It is certain that the Catholic Church in the middle of the 20th century was calling for a reform. But what kind of

reform and in what way? The whole history of the painful crisis that the Church went through could perhaps be summarized in these two questions. They were at the heart of the history of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus between 1948 and 1975.

10 - Pontifical Documents of His Holiness Pius XII, year 1952, ed. St. Augusti 1955, p. 471.

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The speech of Pope Pius XII was, in fact, the starting point of a first reform in the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus in Toulouse, which we want to talk about now.

The events that took place there from 1948 to 1954 are of considerable importance: they contain the seeds of the history of this Congregation until the most recent years.

Reduced to their main stages, these events can be presented as follows:

In 1947, Mother Henri-Dominique Destenay died. She had been Superior General for twenty-eight years, succeeding Mother Hélène Daguzan, Prioress General to whom the Congregation owed its affiliation to the Dominican Order.

The General Chapter that followed his death placed Mother Hélène Jamet at the head of the Congregation. In 1948, Mother Jamet, in agreement with the superiors of the Dominican province and the archbishop of Toulouse, chose Father Roger-Thomas Calmel as religious advisor to the Congregation.

From 1948 to 1953, these two personalities worked closely together in the elaboration of new constitutions which were

approved on August 22, 1953, by the Sacred Congregation of Religious.

The realization, presentation and implementation of these new constitutions were proposed to the Congregation during the years 1948-1952, and led to profound changes in the way of life and apostolate of the religious.

In August 1951, a text was drawn up by Mother General and Father Calmel, entitled: "Research in view of our new constitutions". This text was given to the whole Congregation which was invited to meditate on it, to experiment with it and to try to live it.

However, following the concern expressed by some of the Sisters, Cardinal Saliège, on May 25, 1952, made observations to

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The same evening, Mother General wrote a circular to the entire Congregation. This circular, read in chapter on May 29, said that "a faction had complained to the cardinal. They were asking for a referendum. Mother Hélène Jamet asked the Sisters the following question: "Do you trust the Mother General and the General Chapter to examine a new text of the Constitutions? All: postulants, novices, converses and professed sisters were called together and asked to respond. Out of a Congregation that numbered more than 180 Sisters, 15 answered no.

Accepted by the great majority of the Sisters, the reform thus aroused the opposition of this group of fifteen Sisters who brought their grievances before the Holy See. On December 8, 1952, Sister Saint-Yves Fourcade, with some directives from Canon Didier, Dean of the Faculty of Lille, wrote to the Sacred Congregation of Religious. The

personality of Father Calmel was accused. And Rome decreed the opening of an apostolic visit 1 ' which was entrusted to Father Philippe.

Although very complimentary of the Superior General in charge and of the work carried out by Father Calmel, the canonical visit ended with a sanction: relations between Father Calmel and the Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus were suspended, all correspondence and all visits were forbidden.

Exiled to Spain, Father Calmel accepted the sanction, and Mother Hélène, having reached the end of her generalate, convoked the General Chapter of election and asked not to be reelected 12 , even though all the Sisters of the Congregation seemed to want it. Mother Marie-Angélique Lescouzère succeeded her.

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da, assuming a responsibility that almost the entire Congregation would have liked to entrust again to Mother Hélène Jamet.

Such was the paradox of those years: a reform, led by a universally loved and admired superior, was carried out from 1948 to 1953. Approved by Rome, it received the most varied praise: the Roman authorities hailed in it the renewal of religious institutes desired by Pope Pius XII. Curiously, however, the Sacred Congregation of Religious signed two decrees just a few months apart: one that approved the new constitutions in laudatory terms, the other that sanctioned the initiators of this work, introducing into the history of the Congregation an uneasiness and a disunity that the years were powerless to erase.

How can this be explained? Was it the substance of the reform, the canonical aspect of this work of recasting, or the

manner in which it was proposed that led to these difficulties?

To answer this question, it was necessary to consult the official documents that were exchanged between Rome and the Superiors of the Congregation. This was done. In addition to the letters of the Superior General of the time, Mother Hélène Jamet, and of the Dominican fathers who were in charge of the affair, it was then possible to consult, in the archives of the bishopric of Toulouse, the file composed by the Sisters who lodged their complaints in Rome 13 . This file offers the advantage of presenting the arguments of the party opposed to the reform and makes it possible to retrace step by step the organization of the opposition. To evoke the other party, our study has been based on the texts of Father Calmel, on the talks to the Sisters in which he explained his intentions, on the private letters which gave him the opportunity

which we were allowed to photocopy, disappeared during the updating of the archives. In 2012, it was impossible to find it despite the help of the local archivist.

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The last testimony was given to us by the one who was his secretary during the reform, despite her young age and her few years of religious life: Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin. A last testimony, at first hand, was given to us by the one who was, at the time of the reform, his secretary, in spite of her young age and her few years of religious life: Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin. The Father had preached the retreat that prepared her for her vows, and from the talks he gave her, the work School and Holiness was drawn up, which takes up all his thoughts. This retreat, which took place in 1952, was the fruit of Father's reflections while he was writing the new constitutions. Mother's personal papers contain a large number of messages written in Father's own hand, messages addressed to the one he familiarly called his "dearest daughter," in which he often expressed his reflections on the work in progress. The years leading up to Mother's recall to God, which occurred in June 2014, were in part devoted to gathering her memories and having her comment on the new constitutions that Father composed with Mother Helene. The presentation of the spirit that presided over the reform owes much to these comments.

Let us try to penetrate a little into the spirit of this reform which was the object of so many difficulties.

1

The substance of the reform

Vows

The principle of reforming the constitutions of religious institutes has deep and ancient roots in the Church. The Church has often felt the need, after periods of spiritual weakening, to reform the religious orders which represent, as it were, the elite of Catholic society. But these improvements, undertaken at different times and under very different circumstances, have always presented common points in the light of which the study of the reform of the Constitutions of the Dominican Teaching Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus, begun in 1948, must be illuminated. If there was a rupture with the tradition of the Church and, therefore, with the tradition of the Institute, it was manifested principally in the opposition to one or other of the principles according to which the Church has always undertaken these reforms.

Perhaps surprisingly, the concern for a certain adaptation of religious life has never been absent from the concerns of the Church. The successive renewals of religious orders have often been adaptations

towards the outside in order to reach more effectively the sanctification which is the general aim of the Church and the special aim of religious life,

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as Romano Amerio¹⁵ notes. All the founders of religious Orders or religious congregations have addressed the difficulties and aspirations of their time in an attempt to draw a greater number of souls to salvation. The great Cathar heresy was answered by the creation of the Order of Saint Dominic to preach the truth by word and example of an austere and poor life. The thought of the Christians who fell into the hands of the Mohammedans and were reduced to slavery led a Saint John of Matha to create the Order of

the Merci. Hospitaller congregations were born in times of epidemics. And we could multiply the examples. The desire, therefore, to address the miseries of the contemporary world is perfectly in keeping with the tradition of a motherly Church, concerned with the salvation of souls. For, and this is where the intangible principle lies that places the reform in line with Tradition or not: personal sanctification is always and above all the goal that the Church sets for herself in all her undertakings. She has always refused to water down, in the name of an adaptation to the world, the means of sanctification - prayer, sacraments, religious vows - fixed by the founders of Orders and Congregations, and specified by the teaching of the Magisterium.

A second principle is found throughout the history of the reforms of religious orders. The general law indicates that the modifications have always been made from the easiest to the most difficult, from a certain softening of discipline to a more austere way of life, and that all the reformers have had as their primary concern the conversion of hearts, at the intimate level of consciences, beyond the restitution of external practices, necessary but secondary. Famous examples abound:

From Cluny, for example, came the Cistercians, and from the Cistercians, the Trappists. From the Friars Minor came successively

15 - Romano Amerio, *Iota mum*, NEL, 1987, p. 273.

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The observantines, and then the Recollects, the Capuchins, always with an ascending and “demonizing” movement, never with a descending and “mondanizing” tendency¹⁶.

Finally, a last principle could be called the principle of stability. In the domain which is its own characteristic, that is to say, in the domain of the evangelical precepts and therefore of the vows of religion, religious life has always offered those who followed it a persistent and fixed framework within which they have subjected their existence, which is by nature always in motion, and their human will, which is perpetually in motion. The criterion of stability has always been recognized by the Church as the index of the presence of the Holy Spirit, even though this stability is clearly opposed to the usual tendencies of human nature. A fundamental alteration of what constitutes the very essence of religious life - namely, union with God through the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience - would be in clear opposition to the Church's Tradition.

It is therefore in the light of these three criteria that we can begin the study of the reform of the constitutions of the Dominican teaching sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus, undertaken in 1948 by Father Calmel and Mother Helene.

This reform was carried out along two lines which the Superior General herself defined in a letter of February 9, 1953, addressed to Father Dumeste. Referring to the Congregation itself which was being reformed in a legitimate way, she added

Father Calmel [brings to it] the help of all his intelligence which he really puts at our service, since he acquires, with a dedication that nothing wearies, an understanding of what we do, of what a Christian school is (or should be), and of the consecration to God in a teaching congregation.

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Two main aspects were therefore the object of reflection and transformation in the Congregation: the mode of union with God and of consecration of a Dominican teacher on the one hand, and the practical requirements of a truly Christian teaching.

This project was not entirely new. Many had felt the necessity of a reform that Father Cathala had already demanded during the lifetime of Mother Henri-Dominique Destenay, under pain of a “schism” in the Congregation. This was in 1931. He wrote then:

Reverend and good Mother,

The penultimate note I received from you entrusted me with a commission.) I could not take care of it, being very ill at the time. And I was delighted: it relieved me of having to refuse your request, while preventing me from following it up.

And I want to make my thoughts on this point clear. Unquestionably, in itself, I prefer the great office to the small office of the Virgin; likewise, I like the liturgy very much and I want it to have its place. But we must not lose sight of the fact that these are only means, which must be proportionate to the end. You are an institute of the Third Order - which is not a dishonor - and not of the Grand Order; I believe that you must remain yourselves (having thanks for this) and not seek to achieve some transformation that would bring you closer to the Grand Order. In so far as I can speak, I disapprove entirely of any steps or attempts that are made to adopt, even partially, the Grand Office at Montréjeau. I disapprove entirely of anything that is of a nature to foster or maintain such a spirit among the novices or young mothers, and, if it were up to me, I would do away with all

the breviaries with which some of them strut about, one wonders why.

The life of Montréjeau is very calm and regulated; it is not the same in the houses; and, although you are repulsed by the idea of moving, I maintain that it is detrimental to the formation that you give to the young Sisters that you do not become more aware of the life of the

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houses - to which life, in short, it is a question of preparing the subjects. However, when they arrive, all the young people go through a crisis because they are bewildered. And they all say: "We were not prepared for this. I speak for Toulouse, but I know that elsewhere it is the same.

Your novices must accept that they belong in fact to an active Order. There are too many of them now who, shrinking from all devotion and all substitution, are content to sigh after the great office, when they are not even capable of making the effort required to recite the Office of De Beata in choir. Now, among these young people, there are heads that will not be easily overcome. My impression is that you have here the seeds of a schism: some will want to go to the end of their demands.

Whatever you may have said, I am very sorry that M. Ch. was kept at Montréjeau instead of being put in the middle of the fray. Just look at a house like Toulouse, with children everywhere and continually, two, three mistresses stopped for health reasons - and who have to be replaced when everyone else is overloaded. It is time for some to go and sigh after the great service or the daily sung mass.

I beg you to think carefully about what I am saying. There is a danger of the whole Congregation going astray. There is nothing better than to make liturgy and beautiful services in Montréjeau, as long as it is done in moderation and without the risk of arousing tastes and aspirations that cannot - and should not - be satisfied in the houses.

I bless you 55 ' * 5 ' 6 ^ write to the children. I am too tired.

F. M.-R. Cathala 17

17 - Letter to the

1931. This was the last letter Father Destenay wrote to him on February 11 before his death. In spite of the recom constitutions of 1935. C, tati ° n of the Great Office was prescribed to the Sisters by the

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In November 1951, Mother Hélène sent a circular to the entire Congregation reminding the Sisters that this reform was a continuation of the aspirations that the Congregation had experienced in the preceding years: We have suffered, in fact, from a great indeterminacy which made us turn, helpless, to all winds. We suffered from a great indeterminacy which made us turn helplessly to all winds. The best of us fled to the cloister, the others to the snobbery of a monastic exterior, and a little later to a disorienting effort to regulate our life in general movements, which were quite seductive, but quite vain for us, while another current, claiming to be devoted to the children, led us to an activism without a sufficiently Christian and religious foundation.

Father Calmel and Mother Hélène wanted to reform the Congregation by giving it a greater unity of life between its general end - union with God through the perfection of

charity - and its specific end - the Christian education and teaching of young girls. It was therefore a matter of deepening the religious ideal by a better adaptation of the means to the desired end.

In June 1956, at the beginning of the book *School and Holiness*, Father Calmel summarized in one word the guiding idea of the reform undertaken:

Teaching function and union with God: not juxtaposition, but integration 18 . He explained that] the Sisters are teachers: they address themselves to children who live in the world; they are not nuns and therefore cannot claim to live as nuns. The changes introduced into the life of the Sisters by the new Constitutions are the repercussion of this idea

Different states of life require different religious practices. The question then arises: did the Father fundamentally modify the birth of the child?

is - R.P. Calmel, *École et Sainteté*, ti. de l'École, 1958, introduction.

19 - Oral testimony of Mrs. Anne-Marie Simoulin, Romagna, 2010.

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Does it alter the very nature of the religious life of Dominican teaching sisters? More precisely, does it alter the essence of the vows of religion which form the substratum of religious life? A comparative study of the Constitutions of 1935 and those of 1953 allows us to grasp what was innovative in the inspirations of the two reformers, and at the same time to reflect on the reality or not of a rupture between the two periods.

Vow of poverty

The first vow mentioned is that of poverty. The text of the 1935 constitutions was thus conceived:

By the simple vow of poverty, the Sisters renounce the right to dispose of all external goods that can be valued for money, and the freedom to use them licitly without the permission of their legitimate superiors. Therefore, in virtue of their vow of poverty, they cannot give, receive, sell, lend, buy, borrow, exchange, use, or hide any temporal goods without permission (articles 128 and 129).

In 1948, Father Calmel replaced it with the following formulation: By the simple vow of poverty, the Sisters renounce the right to dispose of material goods, to use them without the permission of the legitimate superiors, and they commit themselves to keep in all things the common life: food, lodging, clothing... It is in fact in a poor and dependent use of material goods that religious poverty consists (article 96).

One can immediately notice the insistence of Father Calmel's text on "the poor and dependent use of material goods", an element in which he makes the essential of religious poverty consist. This idea of dependence was found in the Constitutions of 1903 in article 99:

By the simple vow of poverty, even temporary, a Sister renounces the use of things that can be valued for free money and independent of the will of her superiors.

On the other hand, it removes the enumeration of verbs that specify the use that can be made of temporal goods, enumerated

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The next article of the 1903 Constitutions contains the same ration, in exactly the same terms. In all, eleven articles of the new constitutions specify the requirements of the vow of poverty. But while the 1933 Constitutions, like those of 1903, speak above all of the canonical dispositions of the cession of one's goods, the new Constitutions introduce elements of reflection on the virtue of poverty which must accompany the strict practice of the vow. In the prolongation of article 95 which reminds us that in order for the vows to be true instruments of the personal holiness of the religious and that of the Congregation, we must be careful to observe them not only according to the letter but also according to the spirit,

Articles 100, 101, 102 and 103 evoke different nuances of the spirit of the vow of poverty. The Father recommends to the Sisters "the spirit of detachment and blind trust in the providence of our Father in Heaven" (article 100); he gives them the profound reason for the true love of poverty:

Evangelical poverty must be loved because Jesus loved it and as he loved it (article 101).

This reason sets the real demands of poverty well above simple economy, and will allow the Sisters to be for others all the more liberal as they are more abandoned to Providence. Moreover, a line in article 104 draws the attention of the Sisters to the "witness of poverty" they must give to the outside world - a nuance not found in the previous constitutions.

In *If Your Eye is Simple*, Father wrote a few lines that clarified his concept of poverty:

If eternity is a reality, if one is made for eternal Love, it means, from the point of view of action, that one will be

poor, that one will have renounced one's projects, one's will. (...) Not that one has no plans, but one has put them in God's hands and lives in the present moment. This mysticism of

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However, the present moment (...) keeps all its significance in the action: it means poverty 20 .

The rest of his life was to be consistent with this trust in God, which was not shaken by his attachment to the goods of this world. There was in this conception of poverty a perspective of eternity which was its justification, and the measure of its requirement.

Although slightly different in formulation, the definition of the vow of poverty was not substantially modified. It had, however, received, from Father Calmel and Mother H  l  ne, extensions and new applications: some Sisters wrote in their correspondence the word "new breath". On the other hand, the practical applications of the vow, as we have said, were reduced in the 1953 text. But a more precise study reveals the suppression of only one of them, which was found in both the 1903 and 1935 Constitutions: the obligation for the Sisters, at least once a year, to

to present in writing a complete list of the objects which are for their use to the superior of their respective houses, so that she may either take them away or allow them to use them again, as she deems fit before God 21 .

No such prescription is found in the new constitutions. But paradoxically, the Father, who refused to draw up a directory or a customary for the Sisters in order to leave room for the inspirations of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Sisters, the Father, who was not embarrassed by people, worked

energetically to simplify their living environment: the superfluous mirrors, the furniture that was too rich were removed and given away, the silver crosses on the vestments were melted down in order to make chalices. The Father's demands in this area created tenacity in some Sisters.

20 - Si tan œil est simple, Impr. du Viguiier, Toulouse, January 5, 1955, p. 21.

21 - Articles 109 of the 1903 and 140 of the 1935 constitutions.

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sions: misunderstood, it was interpreted and judged severely by many.

According to Father, only bakeries and bookstores should be kept 22 ,

wrote a Sister to the Sacred Congregation of Religious, in her accusation file. Too liberal for some, the Father seemed too rigorous for others, even very harsh.

A reading of the Father's writings allows us to better understand this apparent contradiction. To the novices of Montréjeau, he reminded them in a first interview of the requirements contained in the new constitutions:

You have put yourselves under a rule of perfection - a rule that is not in view of an average, even a good average of virtue and zeal, but in view of the perfection of love and zeal 23 .

In an interview entitled Pauvreté intérieure, he extended his thoughts:

To have the soul of a poor man is to have no greed for material things, and no greed for the goods of intelligence, virtue, prayer or the apostolate. (...) Of course, charity is important above all else. But it is poverty that is the way to charity. Charity does not enter into a soul that is stingy, attached to itself, rich in its goods.

And he quoted a verse of Saint John of the Cross that he particularly liked:

Supported without any support, I will be consumed with love... Responding to the concern of those who saw in his words a diminution of the asceticism demanded in the previous

22 - Archives of the evcchc of Toulouse. File sent to the Sacred Congregation of religious in 1954 by Sister Yves-Marie Fourcade.

23 - R.R. Calm, First Spiritual Talk to Novices, October 1953, § 2.

24 - R.R. Calmel, Eleventh Spiritual Interview to the novices, July 23, 1953 and June 7, 1954.

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your constitutions, he recalled in the ninth interview to the

You must remember the teaching that Jesus does not cease to give in the depths of your soul and which personalizes the teaching that resounds outside. That is to say, you must be faithful to the extent that you see the demands of evangelical poverty more clearly from what your constitutions indicate. (...) Poverty does not exclude but rather calls for the beauty of the setting of life; the beauty of this setting is the poverty which sings to Jesus Christ, the

living memory of the glory of his mysteries of humility (...) Note, moreover, that the spirit of poverty, which is required of all, would be a vain word if it did not lead to an effective impoverishment.²⁵

So the details were important to him. But he wanted to include them in broader perspectives. In his book *According to the Gospel*, he gave a commentary on the beatitude of the poor that many Sisters found beautiful:

Love comes to dwell in the one who is poor and who loves his poverty, who cherishes it, in order to present it and give it to the poor, crucified and glorified Christ. The presence of God, and the fullness and happiness that radiate from it, burst forth only in the emptiness and the destitution of self²⁶ .

But these explanations did not always disarm the opposition of the Sisters who reacted against what they called the excesses of the Father. On the other hand, they make it possible to notice that the reforms proposed by the Father did not go in the direction of a relaxation, but on the contrary in that of an increased requirement. This is how they were perceived by all, whether accepted or rejected.

It seems that, on this point, Mother Hélène succeeded in establishing a certain balance between the demands of the Father she shared with

25 - R.R. Calmel, *Ninth Spiritual Interview to the novices*, May 1953 and June 1954.

26 - R.P. Calmel, *Selon l'Évangile*, Paris, Lethielleux, 1952, p. 14.

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The Sisters were very impressed by her example of detachment, and she had a great deal of respect for her own life and that of the Church. The example of her detachment struck the Sisters:

Mother Helene," wrote one of those who knew her in those years, "had reached a truly remarkable degree of trust in God in this area as in all her life. It was the certainty that God cannot fail someone who seeks only his will. Her certainty was transformed into an unalterable peace that gave her that slight aspect of indifference that could surprise and disconcert those who did not know her well.

The Sisters saw through her the concrete realization of the Father's demands.

In the chapter devoted to the vow of poverty, an attentive reader will discern yet another change with respect to the 1935 constitutions. This time it is an addition.

The new constitutions introduced into the articles on the vow of poverty the concerns of Father Calmel and Mother Hélène about the apostolate of the masses of the people, the penetration of the most disadvantaged. These points, so anchored in the time to which they belonged and whose evocation immediately brings to mind Father Godin's book: France, country of mission, appeared only slightly in the constitutions of 1935. The 1953 constitutions, on the other hand, give them a large place, for example in article 106:

The practice of poverty will dispose the Sisters to better understand for themselves and to better teach, whenever necessary, the Church's doctrine on economic and social questions. It will dispose them to love the little ones and the poor and will help them to have an understanding of different environments and an effective dedication to those

who find themselves in difficult or inhuman living conditions.

27 - Oral testimony of Mother Anne-Marie Sir

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Social issues were very present in the Father's mind. No doubt this was due to the era marked by Catholic Action, the discovery of the working world and its needs... Should we see in this a radical transformation of the Congregation's apostolate, a kind of change in what would soon be called the "proper charism" of the Institute? Since its foundation, the Congregation had been so concerned about the poorest that it did not want to open schools for "paying" girls if it could not at the same time open one for the poorest. Nevertheless, the Constitutions of 1935 specified, in article 301, that

the teaching and education of the Congregation is directed to young ladies and young people above the working class.

The following article, however, opened up wider horizons: However, because the Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus must not be deprived of the consolation and honor of devoting themselves to poor children, so dear to the Divine Master, the Congregation will be able to found, in addition to boarding and day schools for young ladies, free schools and workhouses.

Section 303 added:

Moreover, the Congregation may establish gratuitous schools in any place without holding a boarding school for girls; but it may not hold a boarding or day school anywhere without a gratuitous school or workroom.

The 1953 constitutions reversed the priorities:

In its work, the Congregation addresses itself to young girls from all social backgrounds with a preference for the poorest and most abandoned [article 71].

It is true that the beginning of the century was still marked by real material poverty. The Father, who came from a very simple background, had certainly suffered not only from difficult living conditions, but even more so from the distinctions established by the teachers between social categories. The age of

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The Father was affected by this and it was probably for this reason that he sometimes said, as a joke, that he had “the heart on the left”. The Father was affected by this and it was probably for this reason that he sometimes said, as a joke, that he had “a heart on the left”.

These opposing circles were perhaps not as marked in the Congregation as Father seemed to think. But he wanted to point out the pitfall. Discovering the charism of the Congregation which had always been to not let itself be put off by any material, intellectual or moral misery, Father wanted to remain faithful to it in the writing of the new constitutions. The concern to instruct and educate children had led the Congregation to open elementary school in order to reach more easily those whose parents did not intend them to pursue higher studies. But the common goal of all the schools, primary and secondary, remained the same, set by Father:

be attentive to the plea of Jesus Christ in the souls of your children.²⁸

Later, the Congregations that undertook a reform of their constitutions during the post-conciliar years were also interested in this penetration of the poor. But they will try to respond to the difficulty that this reform raised by assimilating the Sisters with the world, by the progressive disappearance of all distinctive signs designating religious as beings separated from the world. To do this, they tried to find a way to reach the dechristianized masses through manual labor in the heart of the working class or poor. This temptation, which would inexorably lead the institutes to the disappearance of what was their very essence - namely religious life - did not touch the Father.

In these articles on poverty, one would perhaps expect him to speak more about manual labor, a concern that will often recur in the conciliar directives. Certainly, more or less

28 - Father Calmel, *School and Holiness*, op. cit, p. 56.

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Father was explicitly shocked by the fact that the Sisters were being served. He appreciated the use of lay personnel when they worked in the work, but not when they served the Sisters in material tasks. That is why he often insisted that the Sisters participate in the household chores, as in article 47, where he asked that they be eager to help with the small material tasks.

In a more general way, he always considered the work of the Sisters, whatever it was, in terms of their quality as teachers. And this requirement, which in his eyes was a form of poverty in terms of time and even the means available to sanctify oneself, was integrated into the structure of a complete religious life. It was not a question of renouncing

an effective material poverty but of considering it within the wider framework of a life of Dominican teaching.

Vow of chastity

A similar analysis can be made concerning the vow of chastity. The Constitutions of 1935 contained four articles which, moreover, appear to be an almost complete repetition of the Constitutions of 1905. They offered a classic exposition of the commitments linked to the vow of chastity:

By the vow of chastity, the nuns oblige themselves to keep celibacy and commit themselves to abstain from everything that is contrary to chastity, so that after their profession, they are bound in a double capacity and consequently any voluntary fault against this vow constitutes a double sin: sin against purity and sin of sacrilege (article 124).

It is therefore necessary that everything be chaste and pure in them: thoughts, affections, actions (article 125).

The virtue of chastity, whose action is more intimate and more extensive, has as its object above all to preserve the soul from all that could defile it. The Sisters will be eager to practice

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as perfectly as possible this virtue so pleasing to God (article 126).

Remembering that they carry the precious treasure of their innocence in very fragile vessels, they will observe great restraint and perfect modesty in their attitude, their words, their looks, their readings; they will practice mortification and humility, and will often pray to the Blessed Virgin to

preserve, in their body and in their soul, that unblemished purity of which the whiteness of their scapular is the symbol (Article 127).

The 1953 constitutions are quite different. While the articles on the vow of poverty took up expressions from those of 1935, here the formulation is rigorously different:

By the vow of chastity and the virtue of religion, the Sisters commit themselves to practice perfect chastity to the fullest extent, that is, renouncing marriage, they give their body and affection exclusively to Jesus Christ (article 107).

The next section states that

the Sisters will watch over their interior conversation, their relationships, their friendships, and their dress so that everything in them, inside and out, is worthy of a bride of Christ.

But this “religious reserve” should not paralyze their zeal, because

He who called them never abandons the first and that, for a soul that has faith, there is no reason to lack confidence (article 109).

This chastity is intimately linked to the “spiritual motherhood of the Church” (article 110) and should allow the Sisters “to love children with a maternal heart, purely for Jesus Christ” (article 111).¹¹ It is easy to see that the novelty of this chapter of the Constitutions lies in the positive and not the negative way of presenting the vow of chastity. The idea that Father explained many times in his talks was simple: he who is called to the vocation loves Jesus Christ, and therefore renounces marriage. For him,

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The essence of the vow of chastity lay in this exclusive self-giving: to dedicate oneself to chastity was to give oneself to a unique love.

The ways had certainly been prepared in the Congregation, for this presentation did not cause any clash. The Congregation had studied the requirements of the vow of chastity for a long time and many documents show the depth of the formation received in the novitiate on this subject. The vow remained the same, but the emphasis was on its positive aspect.

But, it may be objected, a precise comparison of the articles of the constitutions of 1935 and 1953 reveals a change in vocabulary, a necessary reflection of a certain change in thinking. In fact, the Father almost never uses the word “mortifications”, so present in the constitutions, directories and customs of the institutes of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. He explained this in the private talks, courses, and retreats that he gave. Everywhere in the new constitutions, mortification is implicitly recommended, under

various terms but in a clear way: “asceticism, penance.

or through the realities of religious life which are the most vivid manifestation of it, such as “silence”... Mortifications are especially interior: silence, preparation of classes. The word is understood in the spirit of the constitutions, underpinned by a real desire for perfection. But the formulation of the constitutions remains positive.

For example, the Father never wanted to prescribe the penances to be done, with the exception of Good Friday. He refused to write a customary or a directory, because “these

works would have restricted the place of the Holy Spirit in our lives,” he said.

On the other hand, the terms “mortifications” or “guarding the senses” could, according to him, give rise to presumption: “Who guards us, if not Christ? “Or, on the contrary, a certain economy of strength: “I guard myself, I do not take unnecessary risks. “This was his idea.

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The expression used in the new constitutions is that of “religious reserve” (article 109). It seems to be less precise and less demanding than the terms “guarding the senses” or “mortifications” used previously. Because of this, the 1953 Constitutions seemed revolutionary to some Sisters. These articles seemed dangerous to them because they were too broad: they seemed to propose a religious life that was less protected from external dangers and more immersed in the world. The question arose: what limits did Father assign to this immersion? How did he talk about it? What prudence did he use in spite of everything?

What limits? What caution? None, in detail, it seems.

Father Calmel, like Mother Hélène, had a very great confidence in God, and relied firmly on the work of grace in souls. Hence a very broad leadership, not very fussy... remembers a Sister who lived through this period of great changes”.

The Father set very few external norms; he wanted the barriers to be internal. Hence the importance he gave to the intellectual and spiritual formation of the Sisters, not only personal, but also communal.

There is more courage in being what you are, even if you make mistakes, than in appearing to be what you are not 30 ... he explained.

This absence of external frameworks could lead to fears of a weakening of religious life, a dangerous immersion in the world. Yet, Father defended himself against this:

I am not relieving you of the separation of the century. I would only like to make you understand that you are charged with a solitude of your own³¹ .

29 - Oral testimony of Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin, Fanjeaux, August 8, 2007.

30 - Ibid.

31 - Father Calmel, unpublished note, archives of the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus of Fanjeaux.

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Here again, numerous excerpts from his writings and letters offered the necessary explanations for those who wanted to better understand his thought. To the novices, he reminded them of the beautiful ideal of their consecrated virginity:

The Church is a mother spiritually, since she gives birth to children to eternal life by her “peregrinating and crucified” charity (...). But you, because of your vow of chastity, have a privileged participation in this fruitfulness. Indeed, what is the reserved mission of the Church: to save souls by loving them in her union with Jesus Christ, you make it more manifest since you devote yourself solely to this, since you renounce the maternity of the flesh: and not only do you

better manifest the maternal mission of the Church, but you allow this mission to be more effective in you, since in order to be better at the things of the Lord, you want to be solely at these things.³²

But the Father was not content to present a beautiful ideal, he specified its requirements:

This means that you must love people with an apostolic love, very pure and very strong. (...) Practically, this spiritual motherhood requires :

- A lot of prayer and a regular conversation with Jesus.
- The conviction that the gift of yourself, which must therefore be all the more pure and all the more generous, is certainly possible (...) proceeding only from grace and prayer.
- A firm and lenient attention on your giving faculties so that they gradually decant ³³ .

For the novices, he had written this prayer:

Lord, grant me an appropriate field of action, a field of apostolate for your sake and for the sake of these children who are yours; not only or primarily for the sake of my nature, which needs a building site, which becomes disorganized and ruined when its powers of giving remain unused

32 - R.R Calmel, Second

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and as if stretched into the void; not because of this first, my God, but because of what you have given me to transmit to

souls. In the very measure that I am given to act, I will do everything to never lose sight of the fact that it is you who send me, that I must be a messenger according to you. It is not nature that sends me and projects me into this affection for children and into this action with them. Far be it from the Father to diminish the delicacy recommended in the practice of chastity, to abandon the precautions that the saints took to preserve themselves from defection. Later on, his correspondence would even be vehement against the abuses of priests and religious who neglected to wear the religious habit and devoted time to leisure activities and audiovisual means.

If this severity is not present in the new constitutions, it is because at the time of 1948 there was no indication of the deterioration of morals so soon to come within the religious institutes themselves. The Father's concern is rather about the life of prayer and union with God which are both the index and the guarantee of consecrated chastity. The demands of the new constitutions on this subject are entirely contained in the concern for a true union with God in connection with a spiritual motherhood.

Vow of obedience

It remains to study the vow of obedience. Here the differences appear in a clear way. First of all, we must note the order chosen for the presentation of the three vows which places obedience in the first place in the constitutions of 1935 and last in those of 1953. Father explained this in part. The second talk to the novices speaks of the link between obedience and chastity:

Without doubt, he writes, if we consider things abstractly, obedience, that is to say the renunciation of doing your life - I mean doing it even in order - obedience, in the hierarchy of

the vows, occupies the first place. But, from a practical and concrete point of view, we must see that chastity

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...] This total resignation of self for the sake of God alone (that is obedience) is already in the chastity dedicated to God. (...) Only this total resignation of oneself for the sake of God alone (this is obedience) is already in chastity dedicated to God: to give God one's heart and body is to renounce one's life.

Here again, we must compare the texts. Here is the one from 1935:

By the vow of obedience, the religious, sacrificing to God what she holds most dear, her freedom, commits herself to obey the precepts of her legitimate superiors, in all that pertains directly or indirectly to the observance of the vows and the constitutions (article 118).

In order to practice an obedience as perfect as possible and to better enter into the spirit of their vow, the nuns will consider the superior, whoever she may be, as holding for them the place of Our Lord, and will have for her a true respect and a sincere love (article 119).

In all that is legitimately prescribed to them, the sisters will apply themselves to obey with a supernatural obedience, prompt, joyful, integral, without excuses or objections, without bad grace and without murmuring. They will try to join to external obedience, interior obedience or obedience of judgment, by which, in carrying out the thing commanded, they do not allow themselves in any way to examine the conduct or the intentions of those who command it (article 120).

Nevertheless, the nuns are permitted to present their difficulties, provided that they are willing to submit to the decision of the superiors (article 121).

The constitutions of 1953, while taking up the essential ideas, presented the wish in a different way:

By the vow of obedience, the Sisters contract the obligation to obey according to the Rule the formal precepts by which the Superiors apply the Rule and the Constitutions and direct the Congregation (article 112).

For religious obedience to bear fruit, it is necessary, according to the general laws of the virtue of obedience :

- that the Sisters have a personal concern for the common good in whose name they are commanded and which is not only the

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prayer, the regular discipline but also the apostolic activity of the Congregation;

- that they actively assume with all their heart and talents the obediences that the superiors assign to them with the responsibilities that these entail;

- that they not be afraid to make known simply and respectfully to their superiors their ideas about their obedience and the affairs for which they are responsible; and that the superiors facilitate this openness, while reserving for themselves the final word.

But in order for obedience to have its full religious value and supernatural fruit, it is also necessary that it be sustained by a spirit of fundamental and universal renunciation of one's

own will and by the ardent desire to do in all things only the Will of God. The principle of religious obedience, then, is faith in the One who gives authority to superiors and not affection, admiration, or natural confidence in the person of those superiors, even if these feelings accompany faith. Religious obedience is always accompanied by reverence, filial piety, and cannot coexist with an attitude of opposition (article 114).

The great difference between the two texts, it seems, concerns the obedience of the judgment. For the constitutions of 1935 speak of

to join external obedience and internal or judgmental obedience, by which, in carrying out the thing commanded, one does not allow oneself in any way to examine the conduct or intentions of those who command it when there is no mention of them in 1953.

The form of obedience presented here, in the constitutions of 1935, is traditional. It is, at that time, practiced in this way by the majority of religious congregations, especially by those, very numerous, which came into being in the 19th century. Romano Amerio summarizes it well when he presents Rosmini's teaching on religious obedience. His analysis is not limited to the Institute of Charity founded in 1839 by Fr.

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Rosmini. It is an expression of the traditional doctrine of the Church on this subject:

Obedience, writes Romano Amerio, consists in freely renouncing once and for all one's own will in favor of the will of the superior, and therefore in renouncing the examination of the command. Without doubt, obedience is a sovereignly

rational act, because it is based on a reasoned conviction, not the conviction that the particular work commanded is good (...) but the conviction that the superior has the legitimate authority to command. The philosophy of words supports asceticism. The Greek verb (peithomai) which means “I obey” has as its primary meaning “I am persuaded”: I am persuaded, not of the essential goodness of the act, which I could therefore do in all autonomy to have chosen it myself, but of the right to command which the one who commands possesses here”,

This was the traditional conception of obedience.

However, the new constitutions of 1953 warn against passive obedience that would refuse to take responsibility, to reflect on the orders given. Article 115 is very explicit:

The purpose of obedience is not to make the Sisters passive performers, nor to cultivate an excessive need for protection, but to make them love the Lord better and serve Him better in His members, leaving their own will to be sure to do God's.

And among the pitfalls that Father Calmel pointed out to the novices in 1953, we can read these:

Instead of taking oneself in hand, with courage, but in dependence,

- to look for support and pampering from superiors, and basically to avoid being oneself and growing; (...)
- from the moment one has to obey, to find oneself paralyzed, not to put all one's energy into it, not to be able to mobilize all one's vital forces; (...)

i Amerio, op. rit., p. 283.

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- not to be simple enough to expose to the authority what would seem to you to be better in what you are in charge of; (...)
- do not take the risk of putting forward a proposal that is considered reasonable for your sector on the pretext that you might be rejected 35 ...

All the texts of the Father are a call to active and effective obedience.

Is there an opening here so wide that it calls into question the reality of obedience in relation to the 1935 constitutions which say:

By the vow of obedience, the religious (...) commits herself to obey the legitimate superiors in all that pertains directly or indirectly to the observance of the vows or the constitutions?

Is the change significant? Does it seek to reserve greater freedom for the Sisters? We remember that at the end of the 19th century, French priests, influenced by the writings of Father Hecker - writings that the author retracted before his death - had engaged the French clergy in the adventure of Americanism. In the name of a greater efficiency in the apostolate, they had suggested a questioning of the traditional bases of spirituality. To the so-called passive virtues which had until then formed the basis of the formation of young priests and religious, Christian virtues of humility, obedience, renunciation, they wished to substitute generosity, devotion, and the assumption of responsibilities. An eminent representative of the American clergy, Archbishop John Ireland of Saint Paul (Minnesota) did not

hesitate to write in the preface of a biography of Father Hecker:

We often rely on God more than God wants us to, and there are cases where a novena is a good refuge for laziness and lack of courage... The Catholic of the nineteenth century is, all over the world, much too quiet, much too

35 - Father Calmel, Eighth Spiritual Interview to the novices, March 1, 1953 and May 19, 1954, §6.

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too resigned to what he calls God's will: what he knows best is to attribute to God himself the effects of his own indolence and timidity 36 .

Should we see in Father Calmel's reforms an echo of this current, condemned by Pope Leo XIII in his letter to Cardinal Gibbons?

Father Calmel did not question the traditional conception of obedience, he often recalled that it was "rooted in faith" and not primarily in friendship or admiration. Far from the conceptions of Americanism, he granted to this virtue a purifying value by "the spirit of fundamental and universal renunciation of one's own will" which it implied. To read his writings, it seems nevertheless that he felt the need to clarify his thinking on the subject by denouncing the pitfalls that a too material interpretation of the article could have caused. He often returns to the reality of obedience which is embodied in works to which all the living forces of the person are truly dedicated:

It is all very well to want your life and your works to be given through obedience. But it is still necessary that they exist, your life and your works 39 !

“Obey in the light” said Father Calmel. He wanted the constitutions to give not greater freedom, but greater responsibility. It was a matter of having a personal concern for the common good and of putting one’s talents at the service of the work. The idea of passive obedience was repugnant to him. But the multitude of his writings - impossible to quote here - constantly remind us of

36 - Walter Elliot, 1819-1888, *Le père Hecker, fondateur des Paulistes américains*, Paris, 1894, preface, quoted by Paul Vigneron, *Histoire des crises du clergé français contemporain*, Téqui, 1976, p. 38.

37 - Leo XIII, Letter to Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore, January 22, 1899, quoted by Paul Vigneron, *ibid* , p, 40.

38 - Constitutions of the Dominican teaching sisters of Toulouse, 1953, art. 114.

39 - Fr. Calmel, Eighth Spiritual Interview to the Novices, *op. cit*, § 4.

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his attachment to the traditional virtues of asceticism, humility, gentleness, demanding obedience that refuses

- to disobey specific orders under the pretext of obeying general directives;

- to cheat oneself by having the higher ones allow what the conscience would not allow;

- not to have a real desire for obedience, but to put such skill into a purely external material execution that one will not be “stuck”...;

- to try to put the authority at the service of its own will ,0 .

It was not, therefore, the desire to lighten the ascetic customs of religious life that presided over the proposed changes.

For Father Calmel and for Mother Hélène, these reforms were intended to allow the Sisters to better fulfill their task with the children. They explained this many times.

The general end of the Congregation (the glory of God, perfect charity) and its special end (the work of teaching and education) could in no way be separated, they specified in the constitutions.⁴¹

In itself, in its general end, religious life is nothing other than the Christian life established in privileged conditions.

What is religious, said Father Calmel, is what is evangelical, according to the way of the councils ⁴² .

What is evangelical can be defined concretely by the phrase of St. John: “Abiding in the Son, being perfect like the Father...” or more abstractly by St. Paul: “To be conformed to Christ, justified by faith...” or even theologically by the phrase of St. Paul: “To be conformed to Christ, justified by faith...”.

40 - Ibid, § 6.

41 - Constitutions of the Dominican teaching sisters of Toulouse, 1953, art. 1.

42 - Oral testimony of Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin, Romagne, 2010, from the notes of a retreat in Tarbes, on the originality of the Congregation, September 1950. The notes were reread by Fr.

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logically, by the words of St. Thomas Aquinas: “Obligated to tend to perfect charity... “

The way of the counsels includes the conditions of a total gift to God, accompanied by the greatest possible renunciation of the goods of this earth. But this way of the counsels is embodied in an active or contemplative life.

In the contemplative life, the dominant service is prayer and praise of God. Charity turns to God without visibly turning to one’s neighbor.

In the active life - the term apostolic would be more appropriate - the dominant service is the service of God through the neighbor. Charity is turned towards the neighbor without ceasing to be turned towards God.

Hence, logically, a different “rule” and “way of life. Contemplative life is centered on the service of God; it is ritualistic, because everything in it is directed first and only to the praise of God. The importance of the very letter of the constitutions is great, for it bears witness to the whole of God. Therein lies the true sacrifice of a monastic life.

It is different in an active life: the service of the neighbor is included in religious life. “The third party, that is to say the neighbor, is included in our very prayer,” said Father. This service of neighbor, this love of neighbor, is the rule. There cannot be a catalog of particular laws for this service... The rule is to act for God, seeking the good of our neighbor. To demand of the Sisters the strict observance of monastic practices, to the detriment of a reflection on the “incarnation” of love of neighbor at every moment of

religious life, would introduce into this life a dichotomy which would distort it and divert it from its proper vocation.

And since the service of charity proper to the Congregation, the manifestation of its consecration, is teaching, Father presented love of neighbor as the norm of this teaching.

For, and this was the second aspect of the reform, Mother Hélène and Father Calmel sought at the same time to specify the requirements of a “renewed Christian school”.

Christian education and teaching

One idea dominates all the reflection led by Father Calmel, the interpenetration of teaching in religious life and of religious life in the work of teaching. All the means of sanctification: silence, prayer, asceticism..., were considered under this aspect: the concern for God served in the neighbor. “If there were no teaching, your religious life would not exist”, wrote Father Calmel. Mother Hélène developed this idea in a letter to the Congregation on November 13, 1952:

This linen (the Christian education of children) is purifying in itself. To keep it constantly before the eyes of all of us already requires a perpetual questioning of our interior and exterior attitudes, a putting in their place of the selfish, narrow or too human points of view in which we often get stuck, inextricable nets which prevent us from lifting our eyes from our work and putting values in their place.

If we really see that our community and our home have no other reason for being than the service of Christ in the souls of our children (and in our own by this way), do you see what rectification of our outlook will follow? Our personal study, the preparation of our classes, the discipline of the children, the amount of work to be given them, their leisure

time, our relations with the parents, the examinations, the disposition of our budgets, everything will be put or maintained on the plane of a Christianizing effort and will escape the danger, which must always be averted, of the temptation of a human success.

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It is in this light that the details of the reform can be exposed. Even before enumerating them, one question comes to mind: was this reform original, even revolutionary? Can it be included in the current of pedagogical renewal proper to the beginning of the 21st century?

For there was indeed a pedagogical revival in France at the beginning of the 20th century. What knowledge did Father Calmel and Mother Hélène have of it?

Father wrote a lot and his correspondence extended to the Jesuit Fathers with whom he had had contact while working for the Catholic France. Around his articles, debates took place, and Father had personal contacts with these Fathers. But it seems difficult to mention any specific names. If he was not unaware of the work undertaken by others on the subject of Catholic education, Father seems to have relied rather on his personal experience to propose a reform to the Sisters.

Father's first "experience" was in his seminary. He regretted the formation he had received there, rejecting the "bourgeois and external morality" too often advocated. His desire was to renew the minor seminaries. Afterwards, his experience had expanded: it was first of all his contacts with parents, families, and children, throughout his ministry as a priest, which gave him an insight into Catholic education in France at that time. There were also the retreats that he

preached to the Sisters of all kinds, for example to the Sisters of Pontcallec, to those of Sainte-Colombe in the Aveyron, or to the Carmelites. In all, his apostolate touched seven or eight dioceses: his knowledge was therefore local, but real.

He had drawn a painful conclusion about the situation of Catholic education in France. This observation was, in part, set out in an article in *France catholique* of December 16, 1949, entitled “Une détresse cachée: l'école libre”.

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The date of 1949 coincides with his first work in the Congregation to offer a reform of its constitutions and its conception of teaching.

The article pointed out many of the pitfalls that the new constitutions sought to avoid.

I should have told you at the outset that I am speaking only in terms of the seven or eight neighboring dioceses, the only ones in which I have any experience of the matter. It may be that things are much better elsewhere. It is therefore within the limits thus specified that I propose my “grievances”:

1° The need for coordination between establishments, both diocesan and interdiocesan, for the same region.

2° Age limit set without too much elasticity. I know such free colleges with superiors or superiors of 80

3° The need to close down institutions when they are no longer used as nests of scandal because, due to a lack of personnel or money, one has had to make do with sad characters for the classroom or the supervision. I note that

there is an insistence on keeping alive houses that for years have openly betrayed their purpose.

4° Religion without constraint, until when should we protest against the widespread custom, in the region of which I speak, of imposing daily mass and visits to the Blessed Sacrament? Thus conceived, the practice disgusts religion.

5° A sense of the secrecy of souls. I know of establishments where the correspondence of children, even with their parents, is open and supervised: this is odious and against natural law and is done sub signo Crucis!

6° To watch over the recruitment of priests who are entrusted with a teaching task. In one diocese that I know of, everything happens in this regard as if having a vocation to be a priest and an apostle were strictly equivalent to having a vocation to teach and educate. Very well: it is the children who bear the consequences.

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7° The need for women's teaching congregations to live their teaching life frankly, I mean to have a "religious" teaching life rather than a religious life to which a teaching task is attached from the outside, a religious life that does not admit or only very reluctantly concedes the minimum of participation in the life of the world involved in a realistic task.

8° And above all the need for a doctrine. I call Christian a school where one knows what one is talking about when one pronounces the metaphysical terms of person, truth, love and the others; a school which is delivered by the truth of doctrine, a living truth. A school is Christian, not precisely the school in which "religious instruction" appears on the curriculum in a merely official way and is a subject for

examination mixed with Latin and geometry, but a school which gives the child, along with knowledge, the living sense of the religion of Christ in view of the real environment in which the child finds himself placed.

The articles of the Constitutions that refer to the Sisters' own work are a developed version of these reflections.

After having recalled in article 226 that the form of service of Christ and of apostolate which belongs to the Sisters is to bring the mercy of the truth to children, that is teaching and education, the Constitutions specified in the following article that their quality as religious will make them fulfill their role as teachers and educators all the better. Moreover, they will never forget that this work gives their religious life its physiognomy in the whole and in the details.

Thus, very specific changes were adopted in the Sisters' way of life to fit their role as teachers and educators.

Primarily, these changes affected the prayer life: the entire office was now chanted recto tono, except for Sunday vespers. Before the reform, the psaltery sisters

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The three nocturnal matins and all the little hours were modified, hence the rising at half past five. The Father thought that the post-war health care system would not survive this. His principle was simple: when one must always dispense, it means that one must reform either the hearts, if that is necessary - or the rule.

Prayer was no longer imposed on all of them at the same time. This freedom, left to facilitate prayer, "freedom of time and not of duration", as the constitutions say, was surprising. The Congregation broke away from the common

practices of the time, with the common preparation of prayer the day before, during the table readings, for example, and then with the presence of all the Sisters in the chapel at the same hour.

Other reforms affected more external points: the habit was simplified considerably, monastic practices such as the great *venia K* were suppressed. The explanation given was always concern for the students and a service better adapted to them. Hence the simplification of the habit which made supervision easier, for example, and daily life among the children. For a moment, and in a concern for evangelical poverty, Mother Hélène and Father Calmel even thought of giving up the white and black colors of the Dominican habit to adopt the blue cloth of the workers. The opposition was too great and reminded them how much the Dominican habit was charged with symbols. So they did not go through with this project.

Were any changes introduced in the nature of teaching? In the introduction to his book, *A Renewed Christian School*, the Father actually presents the reforms made to the modalities of teaching in the

fault committed count URègledeæn institute. ' $P < > U r$ ^ ' P ^

The substance of the reform

Congregation as a profound change in the habits then prevailing in Catholic schools of the time:

We have tried to make clear what a Christian girls' school would be like, perfectly worthy of the title. The vain categories of lowly utilitarian cramming or hollow dilettantism would finally be overcome. The teaching given would really prepare the girl for her mission as a woman as

much for the Church and the kingdom of God as for domestic life and the temporal order of our carnal homelands 46 .

And further on, after having recalled that he does not ignore the researches made on the psychology of the child for half a century nor the interest which present them, he underlines the proper originality of the envisaged reform:

The author (...) thought it necessary to focus on a more fundamental subject, on traditional truths which seem to be discredited (...). Indeed, one seems to forget the primacy of the object, the unequal dignity of the objects of knowledge, the hierarchy which must reign between them and their harmonious intercommunication, the necessity of giving children a true culture, whatever their milieu, and finally the place which must be held by the common doctor Saint Thomas Aquinas.⁴⁷

What means did the Father propose to implement his reform?

It is not sufficiently known, he replied, that, in spite of the importance of methods and the much greater importance of sound doctrine, it is life that gives rise to life, it is a living spirit that awakens other spirits, a living virtue that gives a taste for virtue. It is impossible to overemphasize to masters and mistresses the vital necessity of the interior life, both in the intellectual and spiritual sense.⁴⁸

46 - R.P. Calmel, *École chrétienne renouvelée*, Téqui, 1958, Introduction, p. v.

47 - Ibid, p. VI.

48 - Ibid, p. v.

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In the light of Father's writings, it is possible to draw from these general principles some of the main lines of the reform.

Teaching is seen as education: it is the whole being that must know God, not only one or the other of the faculties - intelligence or will or sensibility - but all the faculties.

The goal is to raise the child to God. This concern must therefore create the unity of the Christian school climate: all secular subjects must be penetrated by a faith perspective. This implies a Thomistic philosophy and theology that gives a realistic judgment of the subjects, whatever they are

Moreover, this teaching was to be the actualization of prayer: prayer is a natural part of life.

It is necessary that the love of Jesus Christ makes us see and want the natural laws of the activity that we have to do to serve our neighbor,

wrote Father Calmel, in a talk entitled Spirituality of a Sister in charge of children to be taught and educated.

He clarified his thoughts by giving practical details:

Read, think, organize yourself to have time, talk, ask for advice, don't get irritated by failures, trial and error, involuntary deviations, accept fifty times that you didn't get it right and go back to it again, don't hold grudges, forget all the nonsense that is said about you, stay singing ,9 .

Beyond these practical details, it was above all the conception of teaching that was rethought.

In one of her circulars, on June 23, 1951, Mother Hélène asked the Sisters to begin the year with a “project”, “a very precise Christian stage to follow with her daughters”, for their class, to be presented to the parents at the beginning of the school year.

49 - R.P-Calmel, unpublished note.

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It would be necessary, she said, that, as early as October, each class teacher be ready to explain to the parents of her students the main lines of this step...

Mother Helene was thinking here of a clear exposition of school programs, both intellectual and spiritual. The teachers should be able to tell the parents, for each of the subjects taught in their class, the goal sought, by means of this subject, in the formation of the child’s personality.

There is almost no mention of grade level. The term culture prevails in all the texts. And Mother Helene and Father Calmel defined the culture offered to students in a Christian school as

the vital and profound adaptation of the mind to the selfless values of beauty, goodness and morality 50 .

The constitutions of 1953 successively mention all the subjects taught and thus redefine Christian teaching step by step. The general characteristics given by the articles of the constitutions were then made explicit by the community meetings that Mother Helene held regularly.

For example, Section 260 outlined the qualities of the Christian Doctrine course as follows:

The teaching of Christian doctrine will be primary, not decorative, but effective, with special attention to Sacred Scripture, especially the New Testament; the time allotted for this teaching will always be respected.

This teaching of Christian doctrine must be intimately linked to that of secular matters which the light of faith will penetrate from within.

Mother Hélène had proposed to the communities a preliminary reflection on a course of Christian doctrine in class of four years.

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third. She suggested that it be preceded by a questionnaire written as follows:

1° “The death of the old man” - “Putting on Christ” - “Coming out of darkness into light”. These are the images of St. Paul to speak of the grace received at baptism.

What is the action of grace in the soul of the baptized? Does it ask nature to disappear? Is it only to grow? Must it not be straightened and purified? Why is this so?

2° “The kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who struggle; it is the violent who seize it.” - “Without me you can do nothing.” How do you explain these two seemingly contradictory words of Jesus?

3° Reread the baptismal prayers in your missal. What do they teach us about grace?

4° “To wait more than eight days to baptize children is a contempt for the grace of God and a grave imprudence” you read in your missal. Is this not the answer to the common

objections: "It is better to wait until the godfather can come... until it is warmer... until he is old enough to choose for himself." Explain.

5° "Grace does not eliminate suffering, it illuminates it" writes Bishop Journet. Explain it by the life of a saint you know well 5 '.

All the school subjects are successively mentioned in the constitutions and indicate practical guidelines that Father's work, Renewed Christian School, further clarified, giving examples.

Were these transformations spectacular in the Congregation? Was the teaching that had gone on before careless? It is difficult to answer this question. Testimonies from former students dating back to that time are rare. They nevertheless speak of the seriousness of the instruction offered. But the sole example of the philosophy courses shows that the teaching was not

51 - Unpublished note, archives of the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus of Fanje

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This simple observation suggests that the reform was profound. Would this be enough to justify the upheaval it caused? It does not seem so, because in reality the reform was effortlessly in line with the aspirations of the Congregation. Moreover, the documents do not bear any trace of claims in this regard. Should we then look for the causes of the difficulties linked to the new constitutions in an implementation that did not conform to the canonical

legislation in force? For there was indeed a dispute on this subject.

6

The situation and the law from 1948 TO 1953

While Mother General and Father Calmel were working for the restoration of the Constitutions, as we have said, opposition arose in the Congregation. The opponents, fifteen in number if we are to judge by the official documents found and by the responses given to the circular of the Mother General, began by exposing their troubles to the neighboring Dominican fathers, asking them for help, even direct intervention. A complete file, preserved in the archives of the bishopric of Toulouse and produced by Father Dumeste, allows us to follow step by step the evolution of this crisis which tore the Congregation apart.

At the end of 1952, M. Fourcade, in religion Sister Saint-Yves, had written to this Dominican to expose to him her worries, her troubles even, her opposition to the concerted action of Father Calmel and Mother Hélène. At the beginning of January 1953, Father Dumeste drew the attention of Bishop Garrone to the seriousness of the situation at the Holy Name of Jesus, as the Sister had presented it to him. He told him that he wanted to talk to Cardinal Saliège himself.

On January 17, 1953, Archbishop Garrone replied to him with the following lines

following :

For a long time now I have carried [the question of this Congregation] with me in anguish and prayer. But I am hardly more than a witness...

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But you are touching on points that are really too serious to not have to discuss them openly with His Excellency. That is the clearest thing I can say on this matter. As for my prayer, it is faithful, and I am convinced that the good Lord will bring out, if each one does his duty in his place, the solution from where it was not expected 52 .

At the same time as this first step was taken, Father Dumeste wrote to Mr. Fourcade and Mrs. Giscard of his intention to go and see the Superior General, Mother Hélène Jamet. On January 20, 1953, he received a reply from Mr. Fourcade stating that on December 8, 1953, she had sent a memorandum to the Sacred Congregation of Religious, requesting absolute secrecy. She communicated to him a copy of a report she had begun to prepare in October for the Master General of the Order, and which she was preparing to send to the Sacred Congregation of Religious.

The report explained the causes of the disturbance that the Sister, spokesperson for the opponents, identified in the Congregation. There were three reasons. Sister presented them as follows:

- Firstly, the role that Father Catmel is playing in our country, an intelligent man, in the judgment of the Fathers who know him well, but a neurotic with fanatical and utopian views.
- Secondly, a campaign of denigration was undertaken against the entire past of the Holy Name of Jesus, against the Mother House, against various superiors, against all those who did not blindly approve and follow the reforms undertaken without sufficient reflection and without weighing them.

- Thirdly, the suppression of the constitutions, which resulted in the greatest individualism and a lot of independence.

52 - This document, as well as the documents cited below (unless otherwise indicated) are taken from the complete file, kept in the archives of the bishopric of Toulouse, produced

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the rewriting of the constitutions. This chapter was convened and held regularly. But the opponents contested its composition. The General Chapter," wrote Mrs. Fourcade, "is made up of all the superiors that Mother Helene has put in place, that is, the packaged, the opportunists or the lambs.

As for the delegates, she felt that they had been elected after a "well conducted election propaganda". The letter to Father Dumeste ended with a violent indictment of the Superior General. Impressed by the words that denounced "the irreducible stiffness of Mrs. Jamet" and her attitude towards the opponents who were "scattered and morally abandoned", Father Dumeste consulted Father Lavaud and Bishop Garrone, before referring the matter to Cardinal Saliège. The two Dominicans imagined the solution of regrouping the troubled Sisters, either in a house of their Congregation under the direction of MTM Bruzaud who had their confidence, or outside the Congregation in a pious union, under the jurisdiction of a bishop who would be willing to accept them and entrust them with a boarding school.

Bruzaud refused, and the letter she wrote sheds light on the situation in a way that makes her intermediary position

between the opponents and the government of the Congregation particularly interesting. As director of the Fénelon course in Tarbes and assistant general, Mother Marie-Paule Bruzaud recalled that she had welcomed and approved, loyally and with joy, everything that seemed to be for the good of the Congregation and of souls; she disapproved, after mature reflection, with respect and suffering, of what seemed to be against.

She also recalled that all the Sisters “agreed on the advisability of adapting the constitutions. Then she spoke of the suffering of the opposing Sisters and explained the role she had thought she should play:

I felt it was my duty to help them through the ordeal.

) I tried to understand their suffering in order to appease them, in order to avoid a serious decision regarding their religious life. I have

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I accepted to be a buffer (excuse the expression) between them and the Most Reverend Mother, to compromise myself in front of those who were not aware of my deep desire. And for them, I was going to look for a solution whose project had been envisaged, accepted with benevolence by the Most Reverend Mother: a foundation of the Congregation where, with time and the grace of God, they could have found a religious balance in the Holy Name of Jesus which they deeply loved.

After having thus exposed her position, Mother Marie-Paule renewed the expression of her fidelity to the government of the Congregation. Whatever the decision taken,” she wrote, “I will accept no responsibility except as delegated by the Most Reverend Mother and by the Holy Name of Jesus, for

whose love I am ready for all devotions, ready also, if necessary, to accept all disgraces.

The painful serenity of this letter - evoking a sacrifice that was a grace - gives real value to the explanations proposed by Mother Marie-Paule for the difficult situation the Congregation was experiencing:

It seems to me that I told or wrote to the Reverend Mother all my thoughts as soon as I saw a little clearly in the event," she wrote. "It is not for me to judge Father Calmel, but he complicated, by his way of being and acting, a situation which was simple in itself. (...) He should have limited himself to the role of theologian. Hasty judgments made without discretion and without charity have disturbed the harmony of the Congregation and the relationship of some with the Most Reverend Mother. Some souls were deeply wounded, discouraged, and the understanding of Mother and Father Calmel made the clarifications that would have been necessary at that time difficult.

This testimony was confirmed by the events that followed: the troubles caused in the Congregation by the reform of the Constitutions were not canonical, but rather personal. The confrontation of the accusations with the testimonies of the other Sisters of the Congregation, through

The situation and the law from 1948 to 1953

private letters, reveals the complexity of the situation. In reality, the dispute that arose involved Father Calmel and Mother Hélène Jamet. What information do the archives offer us on these two personalities?

The personalities involved

Mother Hélène Jamet

Discreet among the Sisters, Mother Hélène Jamet left few details about her personal life. The documents that are available are very few and do not allow us to write a very thick biographical note. We know that Mother Hélène was born on April 5, 1902. Her attachment to her family was real. Throughout her life, she was concerned about her family. Two events deeply marked her childhood: her first communion, in January 1911, and the premature death of her father, on November 8, 1914. One of his brothers, Henri Jamet, was a friend of Brasillach and the founder of the Balzac publishing house, to which he added the creation of a Balzac Prize. Mother Hélène Jamet belonged to a cultured environment, shaped by conservative political and religious ideas and an admirer of great literary authors. She herself obtained a degree in history.

She entered the Congregation in September 1924, made her first profession on April 23, 1927 and her perpetual vows in 1932. Prioress in Toulon, she was elected Superior General of the Congregation in 1948.

53 - Cf. Father Jean-Dominique Fabre, *Le Père Roger-Thomas Calmel*, Clovis, 2012, p. 145 et suiv.

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From that time on, various circulars addressed to the Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus, to which are added a few private letters, allow us to trace the traits of this personality.

According to all the Sisters who knew Mother Hélène Jamet, the dominant characteristic of her personality seems to have been an exceptional intelligence. As the head of a community, she animated conversations with ease. She was familiar with a wide variety of topics and she addressed

them in succession, “knowing how to put forward the competencies of each one” as she perceived them, while at the same time shedding a superior light on the issues under discussion. The concern for truth is evident in many of the letters that Mother wrote to this or that correspondent, and it is regularly revealed in expressions that are proper to her:

I trust in the rock that is Truth,” she wrote in November 1969, “and the shifting sand that is error.

A few months earlier, she had clarified her course of action in no uncertain terms:

This is what I think the Lord wants from us: like the blind man of the Gospel, that we refuse to say that white is black, that a lie is the truth; but in a growing peace in the midst of the struggles ⁵⁶ .

In addition to “this desire for truth and absolute simplicity, “⁵⁷ Mother Hélène seems to have had a “lucid, surprisingly realistic look “⁵⁸ at events. Her correspondence is peppered with pithy and incisive remarks, as were

54 - Archives of the Congregation of Toulouse, *Nos racines du Ciel*, private edition, p. 83. Testimony of Sister Marie-Luc Sidos.

55 - Letters from Mother Hélène Jamet to Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin, letter of November 1969.

56 - Ibid, letter of 20 September 1969.

57 - Oral testimony of Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin, Romagna, 2010.

58 - Ibid.

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some of her reactions. For example, when she promises to complete a task as quickly as possible. She writes to her general mother:

I'll try to get to the end quickly since you like this kind of work!

At the end of a retreat preached by a Dominican father, she notes simply: "Solid and prayerful. "Referring to Mr. Vernet's architectural work at the Annunciation School, Mother summarizes her thoughts in a few words:

It is admirable and truly signed by its author. The spirit remains the master - and from above! - it assumes the scholastic and other necessities. It is very beautiful 60 .

And these sharp and precise judgments are always accompanied by a great kindness even when they point out flaws:

The good will of sister X... is nevertheless admirable, she writes, a will of flexibility (in her native stiffness) in the service of the good God!

Through some of her reflections, the Mother reveals a part of her temperament:

I can see how the little Sister could be annoying. But annoying, not more... Not being annoying, I'm waiting to see a little more clearly before saying more 61 .

A few remarks prove how little Mother thought of herself, and how humble she was with the gifts she had received: in 1967, she confessed:

his] panic in front of a white paper on which it would be necessary to transmit this dust of small things which make the daily life, or the solid bases on which rest

59 - Letters from Mother Hélène Jamet to Mother Anne-Marie, letter of October 1967.

60 - Ibid, letter of 17 February 1968.

61 - Ibid, letter of January 17, 1971.

62 - Ibid, letter on the feast of the Transfiguration, 1967.

Breaking or loyalty

Anyone could approach her. At times, Mother used very affectionate terms, but always supernatural ones, which spoke of her concern to love with fidelity and grandeur. Certain formulas come up often:

) I pray for you as long as I know, and embrace you with all my heart. Others more varied express the desire to help to grow or to

I would like to know how to be more effective. I only hope that efficiency does not matter much to the Lord as long as the desire is there wholeheartedly and without hypocritical loopholes 63 .

Learning from the doctor about a sick Sister that it was serious, very serious, probably too late, she adds:

He seemed distressed. You think if we [the Mother Prioress and she] were both.

But the look remains supernatural:

I am well aware that holiness remains beyond all the shaking of body and soul and that dying, far from being the supreme evil, is on the contrary the supreme good of the encounter with the Lord 64 .

With the same simplicity, she wrote to her general mother: I believe that I will start writing to you, like that, without precise utility 65 .

And later, complaining softly about the little time spent with her:

It is the lot of this passing and moving life to only notice each other; the essential is to remain together for the service of the Lord who has joined us in this Congregation 66 .

The letters of Mother Hélène reflect her fidelity to prayer. They reveal a life marked by the presence of God, and the

63 - Ibid, mound of 14 May 1970.

64 - Ibid, letter of December 10, 1970.

65 - Ibid, letter of January 21, 1971.

66 - Ibid, letter of 1971.

The personalities i

concern to do everything in conspectu Dei. "I pray as long as I know..." she repeats. And this frequent prayer, to which Mother regularly refers as the only recourse in the difficulties of daily life, is detached from the result.

It does not matter, for example, what outcome the Lord wills. It matters only that we do what he wants us to do.

In the midst of the adversities and contradictions she experienced, peace dominated. She wrote to one of her tried and tested sisters:

The reality of your heart is in the joy of the Lord 68 .

Those who approached Mother Helene were sometimes surprised by her peace, by the kind of inner certainty that emanated from her, and which she communicated:

May the Sisters strive with all their strength to love the Lord and to make him loved, may they implore unceasingly from their Savior the grace to reach the perfection of love which is a perfection of self-forgetfulness and peace 69 .

My “simplistic” view, she said, is full of hope in the mercy of God, in the assistance of the Blessed Virgin, and in the strength of the truth of life and teaching 70 .

We find this same idea in the advice she gave to the Sisters in the spiritual formation of the students.

This set of qualities was not lost on the Sisters. They sometimes enumerated them:

A deep humanity, a keen sense of people, a desire for truth and absolute simplicity, a lucid look at her time that was surprisingly realistic, all this made her a great educator, aware of the real needs of young people 71 .

67 - Ibid, letter of the 4th Sunday of June 1969.

68 - Ibid, Good Friday letter 1971.

69 - Circular to the Sisters, June 30, 1954.

70 - Letters from Mother Helene to Mother Anne-Marie, letter of November 29, 1969.

71 - Nos racines du Ciel, op. cit. p. 81. Testimony of Sister Claude-Marie de Roton.

Breakup or loyalty

In August 1948, Mother Hélène Jamet was elected to head the Congregation. Her advisors were Mother Marie-Angélique Lescouzère, Mother Marie-Paule Bruzard, Mother Marie-Agnès Vergés, and Mother Marie-Aymard de Beaumont, secretary. She immediately set to work on the revision of the constitutions. She visited the communities, exposing her vision of a true Dominican religious teaching life, and solicited personal acquiescence from all the Sisters. It was in this work of presentation that she revealed her human qualities and the height of her intelligence.

Conscious of the responsibilities of her office, she had a demanding conception of the duties that fell to her. Later, she would give a young Superior General this advice, which was surely the main feature of her personal conduct:

Putting the Sisters in prayer...

To be a soul director for all the Sisters without fear of indiscretion: the Sisters are waiting. The souls are waiting.

Pure and uncompromising zeal. We make schools. Let each one accept its limits.

That girls receive an education that puts them in opposition to the world.

To strengthen the Christian common sense that knows that being a priest or a nun is something different from being a

lay person.

Be strict to

- the press
- shows
- cultural outings
- Dominican habit 72 .

She was lucid about the difficulties of the office. She saw them not only “in relation to the sanctity of the Congregation” which she was to lead, but also “in relation to the sanctity of the Church”.

72 - Letters from Mother Hélène to Mother Anne-Marie, letter of July 4, 1967.

The personalities involved

The dangers are born in the heart of the “battling, tiring and solitary life” of a Superior General, she wrote. Dangers arise at the heart of the “hard, tiring and solitary life” of a Superior General, she wrote. The solution lay “in a stripping away of [oneself], this leaning on God, this indifference to success on which the Lord counts.... “In the most difficult hours, her remedies were always the same: a little withdrawal and much prayer.

Knowing that she was responsible for the sanctification of the Sisters of the Congregation, she did not neglect the details of an often complex government, but refused to let herself be monopolized by

this dust of small things which make the daily life ” In a lapidary sentence, based on the example of :

Father C. who] lives with the sole concern of leading souls to God; and everything else falls into its place, infinitesimal, contingent, it is the “extra”, it defines this ideal:

Let us be so with the grace of God. May it give us the ability to distance ourselves from our sensitivity 75 ...

For her, putting things in their place did not mean neglecting them:

For us, it is only necessary to have the courage to face this task in its reality and in its Christian demands and to rely on prayer with unwavering confidence in order to implement what we discover in the light of Christ 76 .

Often, the Mother specifies her thoughts down to the details:

73 - These expressions are taken from various letters from Mother Helene to Mother Anne-Marie.

74 - Ibid.

75 - Letters from Mother Helene to Mother Anne-Marie, letter on the vigil of St. Pius X, year unknown.

76 - Circular to the Sisters, Toulon, May 2, 1951.

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Just a few lines to tell you again, on the eve of the vacations, how it would be good to orient them so that they take all their meaning...

It was especially in her directives on teaching that Mother manifested the form of her authority. She had a precise

conception of teaching which the constitutions of 1953 clearly reveal and which each of her circulars also reveals. This particularly clear view of the requirements of a Christian school aroused the admiration of Father Calmel who praised “the royal intelligence” of Mother.

Mother Helene addressed the points that seemed to her to be the most important to implement in a Christian school. In June 1951, she asked the Sisters to engage in a real dialogue with the parents that would allow each student to take “a well-defined Christian step throughout the year. “As a corollary, she asked the Sisters to work seriously and meticulously in view of “the beneficial unity of life that it establishes between the apostolate, prayer and study. The formation she proposed to give to the young girls was based on an interior freedom, not ignorant of sin, but capable of “walking in ardent fidelity” without “being surprised to discover themselves as sinners 75 “. Her goal was precise: to form great characters, true feminine personalities who would later be in society “an evangelical leaven in their environment, “80 “animating flames, “81 developing a sense of attention and giving. In order to achieve this, Mother insisted on collaboration among the Sisters, which would allow them to escape “the danger, always to be avoided, of the temptation of human success.

77 - Circular to the Sisters, June 23, 1951.

78 - Ibid.

79 - Circular to the Sisters, August 22, 1951.

80 - Letter from Mother Helene to the Daughters of the Annunciation, June 1954.

81 - Notes on an interview about women’s vocation, August 21, 1951.

82 - Circular to the Sisters, November 13, 1952.

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In the more specific area of subject matter, Mother Helene railed against “the senseless race through the curriculum.

We are doing our students’ intelligence and its growth a disservice,” she explained, “every time we allow it to be dispersed in the details and become cluttered with them without seeing their point of attachment, the great axes around which they revolve. (...) Everything falls into place, if at least we call by their true names the essential and the accessory 93 .

In a private letter, Mother Helene extended her thoughts, confronting them with the reality of the students entrusted to her:

I think of my students as I have always thought of them: that it is much more difficult to generate personal life and free initiatives than to be obeyed by a docile herd that is happy to think of nothing.

Because of so many human and supernatural qualities, it seems that Mother Hélène was very much appreciated by all the Sisters of the Congregation.

It is, however, this apparently uncontroversial personality that was first implicated in the dossier of accusation drawn up by Mr. Giscard and sent to Rome, as was said above. It is easy to distinguish, in this file, certain aspects of Mother’s personality. Her intellectual positions can be found in what the opponents called, in a way that is a little difficult to really explain, a “Maurrassian absolute”. The flexibility in the implementation of practical details was called “practical liberalism joined to a great utopia”. It is more difficult to

reconcile the Superior General's accusations of lack of solicitude with the testimonies given to Mother Hélène by the vast majority of the Sisters. The latter, including Mother Marie

83 - Circular to the Sisters, May 1953.

84 - Letters from Mother Hélène to Mother Anne-Marie, letter of March 14, 1970.

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Paule Bruzaud herself, noted Mother's great simplicity, her availability and her goodness. The extremely vehement accusations in the dossier present a completely different picture: distant, authoritarian and haughty, the Superior General seems inaccessible to the sufferings of her Sisters. But it seems difficult to give full credence to these impassioned accusations, which are in clear contradiction with the testimonies of the other members of the Congregation, more than one hundred and seventy Sisters.

Father Calmel

When he died, a special issue of the magazine *Itinéraires*, to which he had contributed for seventeen years, from 1958 to 1975, offered the reader some testimonies about his personality. Jean Madiran expressed himself in these words:

The essential part of what Father Calmel leaves us is his published work; nothing else. His person, as he wished it, fades away, except for a time in a few memories that do not belong to the public domain. Nor does the history of the Dominican teaching sisters of Toulouse, a religious congregation of active life with simple vows which owes him a lot, belong to the public domain, or not yet.

A few words, in private interviews or intimate letters, have nevertheless expressed the great attachment of this son of Rouergue to his native land, to his region, to his poor and simple peasant origins. On the occasion of his mother's death, on November 12, 1957, Father confided in her about this family heritage, which he mentioned so little and which is nevertheless manifest in his writings and in the expression of his personality.

85 - Jean Madiran : " Dix-sept années ", Itinéraires, September-October 1976 p.9.

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Those who knew him speak without hesitation of the simplicity of his attire and the effective poverty of his life.

His fragile health was accompanied by a profound indifference - natural or acquired - for everything that concerned the comfort of the body. He practiced a severe asceticism, so that, for example, he never knew what he was eating: good or bad, he swallowed it all with a slingshot; and when someone pointed this out to him, he liked to quote that anchorite who put ashes in his food... His attire was not the most polished, but his clothes were highly functional! He had added to the black coat he wore four layers of pockets which he stuffed with various books. He was a walking library. He wore a pair of everlasting, burnt-bread colored pants under the coat, the kind that were worn around 1930, and that he must have kept for sixty years.

To this poverty and penitence lived in a way that was sometimes disconcerting for people who did not know him or knew him little, he added a touch of provocation that accompanied his horror of worldliness. When he was forced

to attend a dinner party - which he did not like - he would pull out a peasant's knife from his pocket in front of the mistress of the house with gleaming silverware... Mrs. Vernette would tell him:

- Father, don't do it on purpose!

Son of a peasant, the Father was extremely rough, for him at first, and for the others afterwards 86 .

Until his death, he remained poor. He liked to repeat the words of Pascal: "I love poverty because Jesus Christ loved it."
"

Born on May 11, 1914 in Sauveterre-la-Lémance, he entered the minor seminary of Bon-Encontre, in the diocese of Agen. Few are the evocations that the Father himself made of this period. We know from a letter that René Bazin's *Douce France* charmed his 9 or 10 year old self⁸⁷ . ⁸⁷ Another letter allowed him later to explain his thinking on the teaching of literature to children. He

86 - Testimony of Mr. Vernette, collected on September 10, 2000.

87 - Letters to Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin, letter of June 30, 1971.

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deplored the training received in those years. Literary works were, he said, studied but not judged. In January 1950, an article in *France Catholique* delivered, under his pen, reflections that extended this idea:

Let us take the example of literary training. It is not enough for it to be worthy of the free school if it is given by

competent teachers and if it prepares adequately for the obtaining of the donkey skin. It is even more important (and without eliminating the first two things, of course) that the teacher trains the pupils from a literary and artistic point of view, referring to a scale of values, but first of all that he holds one behind him. This will not turn him into a preacher or a professor of philosophy when he is a teacher of literature; but he will remain a Christian teacher.⁸⁸

The deficiencies of the free education of the time had paradoxically raised in the student of Bon-Encontre an appetite for knowledge which surprised his fellow students. They were in contact with him without always understanding him:

Roger Calmel arrived at the minor seminary in October 1926," writes one of them. We continued our studies from the sixth grade to philosophy, in July 1933. So I lived with him for seven years. The first few years he was a good student, not distinguishing himself in any way from the rest of the class. I only remember that in the seventh grade, he wrote a long epic recounting - he said - the exploits of one of his ancestors who had been in the service of Napoleon. This epic was written in patois (we would say today in Occitan) and he used to declaim it with ardor, during the Thursday walks. Then, little by little, from the third grade on, he did an unimaginable amount of work for a young man of that age. He never wasted a minute, taking notes and reading constantly. When we went from the study hall to the refectory or to the chapel in silence, he always carried a book with him... Thus, in the course of a year, - simply to develop his

88 - Father Calmel, "Il faut une ardente spiritualité", dossier , drame de l'école libre", France catholique, 15 January 1950.

“Last letters on the

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- he had memorized two plays by Racine (of which he was the best student in the class;

memory - i Athalie) (...)

e^L'l^'aSlranSwùs the prizes, and yet the competition was severe among the students.

He was a good comrade, upright and loyal. But because he was always very tense, too “perfect”, I don’t think he had any friends. These few details will seem a little thin, but what more can be said about a comrade who, by his work, his piety, his obedience, was always a model and sometimes a reproach for our kids?

From these years dates the consecration that Roger Calmel made of himself to the Virgin Mary, this “contract of love” claiming a Marian heart “to love Jesus”, made between “a little page” and his Domina, thinking “of the last evening when [his] immaculate heart [will] present [him] to the heart of Jesus”.

At the age of sixteen, Roger Calmel donned the cassock and entered the university seminary of the Catholic Institute of Toulouse, the Pius XI Seminary, to continue his formation for the priesthood. He studied there for three years from 1933 to 1936. At the beginning of the school year in 1936, having decided to become a preacher, he began his novitiate at Saint-Maximin. He took the habit and the name of Brother Roger-Thomas in December, in the Order of Saint Dominic, that “very great house” where “the hammer on the door is at the height of the rider”, as Father Lagrange 89 said.

The Dominican province of Toulouse then offered a particular physiognomy which could not but mark the young novice. It was still alive with this

Gardeil was already discussing with Father Schwalm in Corbara, this attempt to link Thomism with contemporary philosophical thought, which in 1893 had brought together the

I - R.L. Bruckberger, o.p., *Tu finiras sur l'échafaud*, Flammarion, 1978, p. 135,

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collaboration of Fathers Coconnier and Montagne of Toulouse, of Father Mandonnet of Fribourg, of Father Gardeil and Father Sertillanges in the foundation of *La Revue thomiste*, this methodical reflection of Father Gardeil not only on the structure of theological knowledge, but also on the concrete organization of a system of studies destined to form authentic preaching brothers 90 .

The formation received by Father Calmel during his novitiate years was exclusively Thomistic. Is it from this period that his first contacts with Jacques Maritain date? We know with certainty that the Thomist philosopher came to hold conferences for the novices of Saint-Maximin in the 1940s¹ . Did he arrive there as early as 1933?

It is certain that Father Calmel read and appreciated the works of Jacques Maritain at a very young age. To one of his pupils, aged about twenty, he advised one day the reading of the *Degrees of Knowledge*. You will do as I did. I read it when I was your age; I acted as if I understood, even if I didn't understand everything!

In the issue of La Revue thomiste dedicated to Maritain, Father Calmel wrote the article on the artistic conceptions of the Master. The love of St. Thomas Aquinas, the Thomistic formation are a characteristic of the Father.

The names of his teachers are known to us from the bulletins of the Dominican province of Toulouse which announce appointments. Even if Father spoke little of them, some of his letters mention those whom he considered his “masters”:

It was Dom Diepen who opened my eyes to this mystery, who made me understand the errors of Nestorius (and Eutyches), the scope of Chalcedon, the doctrine of Saint Thomas: Dom Diepen was for me, in the theology of the Incarnation,

90 - Father André Durai, o.p., “Un siècle de vie dominicaine”, France dominicaine, y année, n° 12, December 1950, p. 343-344.

91 - Dominican France, 1 “ year, n” 1, August 1948, p. 24.

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as Garrigou in the theology of the supernatural order in general, as Maritain in the order of the reflection on the life of the spirit and the levels of abstraction, as Cochin and Madiran in the order of the philosophy of the Revolution 92 ...

It is certain that the Father was interested in the work on sacred art of Fathers Régamey and Couturier, whose innovative conceptions he appreciated, while judging them. This interest in current issues sheds light on Father’s personality: everything interested him; few subjects escaped his reflections.

On November 1, 1937, Father Calmel took his first vows, followed three years later by his solemn vows. On March 29, 1941, he was ordained a priest in the chapel of Saint-Maur de Toulon, by Mgr Brulé des Varannes.

The encounter with the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus dates back to the years following her ordination. Mother Hélène Jamet was the architect of this encounter when she was named Prioress General in 1948.

She then requested and obtained from the Dominican fathers, with the approval of Cardinal Saliège, the appointment of Father Calmel as a counselor to the Congregation. Father Nicolas himself gave a precious testimony of the help he gave her, when in 1954 he recalled from the Sacred Congregation of religious in Rome

the great services he [Father Calmel] rendered by his theological and spiritual teaching, as well as the apostolic fervor he maintained in souls 93 .

Her role was therefore that of an advisor and a teacher, at a time when the role of religious assistant of the women's congregations was not yet defined 94 .

92 - Letters to

93 - Archives

94 - This forum

mere Anne-Marie, letter of March 22, 1971.

h' **1 ^7' éR1UüU ' *ettre* < u P* re N' 1 "!* 5 to the Sisters of the Congregation 5 .apres la visite canonique de 1954. ncuon t created by the Sacred Congregation of Religious at

the beginning of the ante, esunee to be generalized thereafter in the Congregations femi

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Father Calmel assumed this role at Holy Name of Jesus until 1954. His influence was exerted during these few years, mainly through his spiritual guidance.

For the Congregation, he composed many prayers that were to mark the life of the Sisters: the prayer of oblation from the first vows, the one “to ask for the grace to live one’s vocation well”, the consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary: Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus and ours, look upon your Dominican teaching daughters who want to remain faithful against all odds (...). Obtain for each one of them the right to live in perfect accord with her noble dignity as the spouse of Jesus Christ. Obtain for her that she always sing in her heart the Magnificat of humility, of charity, of victory through the Holy Cross. Ask her to confess with her words and with her whole life the mystery of the holy sacrifice of the Mass as the Church teaches and keeps it from the beginning.

His devotion was to the heart of the Virgin, to St. Dominic:

O Father of preachers, remembering your holy preaching, obtain for us that we may lose ourselves and disappear in the divine truth guarded by the Catholic Church alone. Obtain for us that we speak only of God and with God. In these times of Revelation, we seek only the unchanging truth of salvation... We trust that the rest - and first of all the miracle of holding on to day by day - will be given to us in addition.

The Father’s work in the Congregation, carried out in agreement with Mother Hélène Jamet, was first of all a work

of formation with the Sisters and especially the novices. He did this through the courses he gave in the novitiate, with the concern of forming living intelligences nourished by interior life. His courses did not really have a common thread. They were oral and Father had set himself the goal of having people judge according to the truth. So he tackled all subjects: religious, literary, political, social, *etc.*

nines, as the history of the Holy Name of Jesus proves.

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artistic, moral, and even current affairs.

The Sisters who received his teaching recall the phrases that he delivered from memory each week for their meditation or reflection before beginning his

They say they can't resist

to the pleasure of delivering some of them for those who are willing to read them, for they are very revealing of an aspect of the Father: "To live dangerously is a pleonasm, one is out of danger only in death." (Maritain) "One of the signs of Dominican contemplation is poverty in action. "No soul is too poor for the redemptive kiss. " (Thibon)

"No thing in the world is as suspect as love. "(Saint Angela of Foligno)

They remember Father entering the Saint Thomas Aquinas course, one day in 1952 or 1953, in the meeting room of the novitiate, the cope on his back, the capuce on his head, a large half-open suitcase under his arm, from which he successively took out on the table a pair of galoshes, the

Summa of Saint Thomas and I don't know which book by Maritain or Cardinal Journet...

Their memories still speak of the original course of the

Each week, the course would begin or end with a pithy sentence that he would share with us, drawn from his latest readings, and to which he always gave the reference:

"Are you able to suffer without revolt? Enjoy without remorse. "(Thibon, L'Échelle de Jacob)

"All things are revealed to the one who waits on the condition that he does not refuse in the darkness what he once glimpsed in the light. "(C. Patmore)

"The spiritual is linked to the temporal and has a military force." (Péguy, VArgent) 95

95 - Testimony of mother

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The intellectual formation that the Father wanted to give to the young Sisters went hand in hand in his mind with a demanding formation of the conscience: he insisted on the necessity of not appearing to be what one is not, on being faithful to one's origins. Two documents intended for the superiors in charge of the novices show this concern:

What to do during the preparation for this life [of Dominican teaching sisters]? Learn to pray: ask for this grace and apply yourself to prayer; learn fraternal charity: see your Sisters at this level of a team of consecrated women in view of a work. To know the Mysteries (this is where one of the major

characteristics of your attachment to YO rdo doctorum appears). To know the “spirituals”. To know the meaning of the means that are those of the cloister: regularity, bell, silence, solitude; to understand their profound meaning so that you will transpose them as soon as you are in the fray. To know yourself with humility in order to treat yourself with clemency and gentleness 96 (family, ancestors, education, environment) so that in action it becomes easier for you not to be guided by class or race reflexes, never seriously revised. In short, an authentic preparation 97 .

With the Sisters of the Congregation, Father continued his work in the same direction. His action was less direct, however; it was carried out through the intermediary of the Mother General and her government. In the words of one of his followers, Father had a “conqueror’s soul”. Demanding for himself, he was demanding for others, and his one-sided nature refused to compromise. This fiery nature was not without clumsiness, sometimes interpreted a little heavily, even though the Father’s concern was the sanctification of those he was addressing. Hence, from

96 - Father often quoted Bernanos’ phrase from the Diary of a Country Priest: “It is easier than one thinks to hate oneself, the grace is to forget oneself. But if all pride were dead in us, the grace of graces would be to humbly love oneself like any of the suffering members of Jesus Christ. “Librairie Plon, 1974, p. 311.

97 - A brief for simple novices, July 13, 1950.

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His judgments were often peremptory and without appeal, at least in the absolute, because concrete cases moved his

priestly heart.

It is necessary to read the letter that Jacques Vier wrote to him, following one of his articles on the Catholic writer, to realize the vigor of his remarks, even on a subject of this order. Jacques Vier salutes “the perfect clarity” with which the Father posed “the much repeated problem of the Christian writer”. Then he rejoices to have read under his pen “a solution” which is “really a solution and not a way out”.

Because finally, he exclaims, my Reverend Father, the problem is solved, from the first lines of your article, and by your very impatience: “It is all the same grotesque, you say, to claim that it is with good intentions that one makes bad literature (...); I do not see, not displeasing the sinister author of Corydon, why bad intentions would be an assured guarantee of good literature! With good intentions, you will make good literature if you are gifted and if the intention has penetrated to the very heart of your gift as a writer. The same is true in painting, and Fra Angelico remains the irrefutable proof...”

On the persons themselves, the Father’s opinions were clear, without oratorical precautions. If he scorned the enemies of the Church with vigor - “The wretches, the impostors, they believe neither in grace nor in the law 98!” - the Father knew how to be equally demanding with his “faithful”:

There would be for your Sisters to pray better by saying the psalms, and by this means”.

Sanctificetur nomen tuum, that is to say, do not pass, even by the thickness of a hair, by what grace requires 10 .

98 - Letters to Mother Anne-Marie, letter of November 14, 1968, concerning a pastoral note from Lourdes affirming

that, when the practice of the law is too difficult, there is no sin in breaking it, nor is confession necessary.

99 - Letters to Mother Anne-Marie, letter of October 28, 1969.

100 - Ibid, letter of December 21, 1970.

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The Father could not understand mediocrity.

His apostolate with the students was limited. He was never their confessor, but his sermons or letters enlightened a certain number of them. Indirectly, he worked for them, advising the Sisters and forming them for their role as Dominican teachers. At times he spoke of teaching and pedagogy:

You know my insistence on the small amount of homework to be given - the requirement of composed homework, not "thrown away" - the exclusion of Franglais (neologism and syntax), the importance of recitation, the primacy of explanation (and first of all of reading by the students) of a few great texts. The urgency of maintaining Trent and Vatican I and their anathemas 101 .

At times, the Pete would descend to very concrete considerations:

You will never repeat enough to the best of your great pupils that pity, which is so noble and so natural, and so open to grace, must remain unmixed; for pity one can become a missionary, a Sister of Charity. Sister teacher, what do I

know? But one should never marry out of pity: this pity mixed with something else quickly turns into poison,⁰² .

The Sisters sometimes entrusted him with writing a letter to the students on the eve of the summer vacations. Thus, in June 1954, he addressed them in these terms:

I will simply ask you two questions:

First, and knowing that obviously ^{ms}™ you are responsible for being young people end 6 th " v? cances ' -Tues christiana in æternum! - I will no S - cEretians you as follows: Young Christian girl, what to question

Is it enough to pray to be a Christian girl? Is it

Then, since the Christian life sup pos ., 06 ?

laws of God, is it sad to be faithful to Christ? Or, in

- Ibid, letter of February 14, 1968. - Ibid., letter of July 25, 1970.

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In other words, does evil have a purpose? Can there come a day when it does not?

And his letter answered the questions with precise examples. But in short, few documents have come down to us about the links that may have existed between Father and the students, and the former students, when questioned about this period, remember little or nothing about the Dominican.

The asperities of this extremely varied and unusual personality were noted by the opponents of the reform of

the constitutions. They form the basis of the complaints brought to the judgment of the Holy See. While Mother Marie-Paule Bruzaud was content to point out “hasty and uncharitable judgments” for which the clarifications that would have been necessary were made difficult by the agreement between Father Calmel and Mother Hélène, Calmel and Mother Hélène, and while she emphasized the unanimity of the entire Congregation on the necessity of the reforms and their validity, the fifteen “opponents” who demanded a canonical visitation condemned “a perpetual and systematic denigration, a habitual contempt,” a short-sighted judgment reduced to considerations of detail: “to practice poverty, according to him, it would be necessary that all our houses be painted with lime”, they said for example.

Nevertheless, one passage can hold the attention of the historian who consults this file: it is an excerpt from a letter of Sister Saint-Yves Fourcade.

Our real difficulties are not legal - we are not canonists! Moreover, these difficulties have only ever existed for us because of the spirit in which they were created, and this is now being put right. Nor do they arise from the content of the new constitutions. On the whole, they codify what we have been doing for a long time. Our difficulties come from these three years of perpetual and systematic denigration. It has created a climate of mistrust and disunity within the Congregation.

103 - The consultation of private sources, not accessible to the public, has allowed Jean-Dominique Fabre to arrive at an identical conclusion, even though there is no doubt that the Dominican fathers of the province of Toulouse ° *ute ‘ e Calmel would have had a lot to say. Jean-Dominique Fabre to arrive at an identical conclusion, even though there is - “S to*

the P a" sir that the Dominican fathers of the province of Toulouse would have had ° ute ' e Calmel whose too conservative and traditional ideas displeased tf Father indeed: "It is probable that the difficulties were increased by the si mD [: - a note *n Calmel, always very ingenuous in scs relations with his brothers. He said this pèrc knows with openness and confidence, believing a little too easily in recir, " P e nsentiments, and he sometimes let out abruptnesses which couldT'^ scs delicate people. Father Roger-Thomas Calmel, op. cit. p. 186-187, "The*

The results

OF THE APOSTOLIC VISIT

Mother Hélène Jamet's mandate expired on July 17, 1954.

She had therefore begun to organize the preparations for the future General Chapter which was to elect a new superior. Now the dossier of the accusation had reached Rome in the most complete secrecy. To the astonishment of the Mother General, a letter from the Sacred Congregation of Religious announced to her, on the eve of the 1954 school vacations, that the General Chapter had been postponed and that an apostolic visit was to be organized in the Congregation. The surprise was total, not only for Mother Helene but also for the assistants and for most of the Sisters of the Congregation. In a later letter to Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin, Mother Hélène soberly described other events as "almost as painful as those of Pentecost 1954", the date of the announcement of the apostolic visitation which made public the earlier realization of an accusation.

Father Paul Philippe, who was entrusted with the office of Apostolic Visitor, expected the painful surprise that the Roman decision would provoke:

The news of the suspension of the General Chapter, a few days before its opening, must have filled you with astonishment and concern, because it was not accompanied by any reason...

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he wrote on May 21, 1954, from the Angelicum in Rome. Before giving the details of the apostolic visit, he tried in this same letter to reassure the Sisters:

|I know from my long experience of this office how much apprehension and emotion the announcement of the arrival of an apostolic visitor arouses in a congregation.

I would like this letter to dispel, at least in part, this understandable fear. Be sure, in fact, my reverend Mothers and dear Sisters, that I will carry out my mission in a fraternal spirit: we all belong to the same family, that of our most gentle father Saint Dominic.

The purpose of the Apostolic Visitation was very precise and well-defined: The decree of my appointment assigns me only one mission: to inform the Holy See of the situation I have observed. My duty is simply to be as objective an observer as possible. I am sure that you will help me in this by making me aware of your Congregation as it is and as it should be, its mission in the Church, its achievements, its internal difficulties.

And further on Father Philippe specified:

I would like the Holy Name of Jesus to obtain great fruits from this visit, the same fruits that the Holy See wishes for your religious family. An apostolic visitation should not be

seen as an intrusion of the Holy See's agencies into the affairs of a Congregation, but as a sign of the Church's maternal concern: it is a positive help sent to you to enable you to carry out your religious and teaching ideals more effectively in peace and union.

The Apostolic Visitation took place during the months of June and July 1954. The first conclusions drawn by the Visitor, even before the end of the visit, allowed him to extend the mandate of the Superior General and her assistants which should have expired canonically on July 17, 1954. On July 22, 1954, a circular from Mother Marie-Angélique Lescouzère informed the Congregation, announcing the extension of this mandate.

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This letter was careful to point out the canonical character of such a decision: "I am not going to give up my mandate until the General Chapter of the Congregation is able to do so. "The letter was careful to point out the canonical character of such a decision:

Father Paul Philippe, using the powers granted to him, has - at the end of his canonical visit - kept in charge our Mother General and the General Assistants.

It is possible to see in this clarification a response, even partial, to one of the grievances of the accusation file which reproached the government of the Congregation for having acted in the preceding years in an uncanonical way.

What were the conclusions of the apostolic visit? Two letters communicated them to the Congregation: the first, dated October 7, 1954, from the Apostolic Visitor, the second, on November 5 of the same year, from the new assistant to the Congregation: Father Marie-Joseph Nicolas, O.P.

Father Paul Philippe's letter listed and elaborated on five decisions taken by the Sacred Congregation of Religious concerning the Holy Name of Jesus:

- A religious assistant was appointed for the Congregation in the person of Father Marie-Joseph Nicolas.
- This assistant was responsible for the execution of other decisions taken by the Sacred Congregation of Religious.
- It was specified that

Observances and rubrics which are considered an essential condition of membership in the Order of Dominican Congregations of the Third Order Regular and which have been suppressed or modified in recent years should be reinstated to the extent and within the time frame established by the religious assistant.

- A particular clause, whose purpose was "the peace and union of the Congregation", stipulated that

no Father would be involved in the formation and instruction of the Sisters except within the limits set and controlled by the religious assistant.

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- Finally, the Sacred Congregation of Religious maintained in charge the current general government of the Congregation until such time as the religious assistant deems it appropriate to hold the general chapter.

The conclusions of the Apostolic Visitation clearly responded to the various grievances put forward in the accusation file. It will be remembered that the signatory Sisters had noted:

- the lack of a canonical framework related to the reform of the constitutions;
- the break with traditional observances and customs, not only in the Congregation but in the entire Dominican Order;
- the excessive intrusion of Father Calmel in the government of the Congregation;
- the personality of the Superior General and the shortcomings of her mode of government;
- the disunity caused by the new constitutions in the institute.

By the simple fact of the extension of the mandate of the Superior General and her assistants, the Apostolic Visitor considered the accusations against Mother Helene to be null and void. A letter written by the new religious assistant of the Congregation, a few days after the decisions of the Sacred Congregation of Religious, made this conclusion of the Apostolic Visitor even more explicit, if it were necessary:

You have all understood that Rome wanted to show by this extension of the powers of the Mother General the confidence that the highest authority of the Church had in her at the end of this apostolic visit.

The Roman decisions also did not go back on the approval of the 1953 constitutions, thus also rejecting the suspicion of illegality. If the conclusions of the apos

The results of the apostolic visit 109

Nicholas specified that the obligations imposed by the apostolic visitation had “no less authority than that of the constitutions themselves since they come from the Holy See,

to which the vow of obedience binds the Sisters. They were simply “clothed in another form”. And further on he added:

It would be unfortunate if this were to affect the way constitutions are interpreted. All that they provide for must continue to be practiced as faithfully and generally as possible.

Such expressions have a double interest: in the words of the religious assistant, they remind us that Rome has not gone back on its decision concerning the 1953 constitutions. On the other hand, it is certainly not outrageous to read in them the anxiety of the Father, fearing on the part of the majority of the Sisters, not the disavowal of their new constitutions, but rather reticence with regard to the reinstatement of observances that these constitutions had just suppressed. Father Nicolas even speaks of the

The sacrifice, small in itself but significant, that the resumption of observances which, to the great majority of you, did not seem necessary for a life as a Dominican teacher, will represent for you.

This remark is interesting: it reminds us that the unanimity around the reform of the constitutions was almost total.

What were these observances, suppressed by the 1953 constitutions and reintroduced by the Sacred Congregation of Religious?

There are nine of them:

1) The mention of the rule of St. Augustine was to be reinstated in the formula of profession, according to a custom by

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practiced in the Order, and which goes back to the time of Saint Dominic himself.

The letter of Father Paul Philippe, dated October 1954, gives a precision on this subject. He tells us that before making his report to the Sacred Congregation of Religious, he had wanted to be sure of the thoughts of the Reverend Father General of the Order. It was June 25, five days before the death of Father Suarez. So the visitor considered the answer he had received as a sort of spiritual testament of the Master General, the statement of his last wishes. Father Philippe had presented to him the various modifications made to the observances and had brought out, in his own words, “the changes in the way of life of the Master General,

the fervor of religious life and the authentic Dominican spirit that animated [the Sisters],

The master general had then answered very slowly, and with a softness which Father Philippe assured that he would never forget:

Yes, Father, I do not doubt it; but if they want to be Dominicans, they must conform to the observances of the rubrics practiced by our fifty thousand Sisters. I would be obliged to withdraw the affiliation to the Order from a Congregation that refused, for example, to profess the Rule of St. Augustine.

2) It will be remembered that the new constitutions had lightened the recitation of the Divine Office by limiting it to the singing of the major hours. The Sacred Congregation of Religious asked that the little hours be recited again, except during the school year. It insisted that

the rubrics are perfectly observed according to the Dominican ritual (alternation of sitting and standing for both sides of the choir, Pater and Credo at the beginning and end of the services, wearing of the cope in the choir between All Saints' Day and Easter, unless otherwise indicated by the local prioress (for reasons of material convenience, solemnization of Compline and Easter by singing)

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(e.g., at Mass, on feasts, Sundays, and other appropriate occasions).

3) The apostolic visitation re-established the prayers foreseen by the Dominican rubrics for meals, with the exception of the substitution of the Laudate for the Miserere.

4) It was also requested that a part of the ancient customs be added to the suffrages foreseen by the constitutions, namely: the office of the dead, but reduced to a nocturne (or to Lauds) on the occasion of the four anniversaries of the deceased, or if a nun of the house (or the mother general of the Congregation) were to die. For any nun of the Congregation who died, it was specified that the sisters should recite individually once either the rosary or the psalms of penance.

5) The Sacred Congregation of Religious re-established the custom of the *venia* 104 ,

where there will be no usual risk of being seen by children or laity, *i.e.* practically inside the novitiate and in the chapter.

6) The ceremonial of the taking of the habit and of the professions was restored to the 1931 text,

with the deletion of the optional parts, according to the spirit of simplification that inspired it, and with the addition of a few words that mark the special purpose of the Congregation.

7) The text of the constitutions on silence and closure was explicitly mentioned. It was recalled that it had to be understood and practiced according to the letter which was sufficiently clear in article 147. On the subject of silence in the cell, set out in article 150, the Sacred Congregation of Religious specified that it was necessary to understand the words “normally” and “to talk”.

in the strictest sense, in accordance with Article 155.

104 - Venia: cf. note 45 p. 70.

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8) A precision kept to the superiors the authorization to unseal the letters and the faculty to ask that they are delivered opened.

9) Finally, the Apostolic Visitation asked all the nuns to put into practice the text of the new Constitutions on the religious habit to be worn on all occasions, without any exception other than that provided for in Article 12: that is to say, a serious reason of which the Mother General is judge.

In the end, the conclusions of the apostolic visitation re-established one canonical observance: that of profession according to the rule of St. Augustine; two liturgical and spiritual observances (the choral singing of the small hours during the vacations, and the prayers in favor of the dead);

two ascetical observances (the practice of *venia*, modulated according to the presence of persons outside the community, and the authority of the superiors over the mail)

This was very little in comparison with the more profound modifications implemented by the totality of the new constitutions. The mention of the asceticism of silence brought clarification to the text of the constitutions. As for the prescriptions on the religious habit, they were not in opposition to the latter. On the contrary, in their prolongation, they put an end to the conciliatory measures which had left the freedom to wear the religious habit or not, after the decrees of 1941 which authorized its wearing again in France despite the laws of 1905.

Even so, such decisions, so soon after the promulgation of the 1953 constitutions, could be interpreted as a disavowal of the laudatory decree of which they had just been the object. Father Paul Philippe had tried to give a satisfactory explanation:

There remains a very delicate point on which I believe it is my duty to express myself with the utmost frankness, he wrote. I

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I fear, if I were to pass over it in silence, that the conscience of many of you would be deeply disturbed in its confidence in the Holy See. Many of the changes or deletions in your observances have been introduced into your new constitutions and have received the sanction of Rome with their approval. Now, the re-establishment of some of these points, for example, the profession of the Rule of St. Augustine and the choral recitation of the little hours, were

considered by the Reverend Father General as a condition sine qua non for your affiliation to the Order. The Sacred Congregation of Religious has therefore taken into consideration this request of the Reverend Father Suarez and has approved my proposal to re-establish these points, which are considered essential, without waiting for a rectification of the text of the Constitutions, which will come later, after experience. I believe, therefore, that instead of being troubled by such a recent change, one should know how to appreciate the wisdom of the Church, which is not afraid of rectifying a text that it had just approved, when it now sees a greater good in this return to an established tradition.

This explanation therefore links the return of the observances mentioned, not to the suppression of a canonical fault, even less to a failure to meet the requirements of religious life, but to an express decision of the Master General of the Dominicans.

The most contentious point remained that of Father Calmel's relationship with the Congregation. In reading all the official documents that recount this period, it is impossible not to see to what extent the debate was at once heated, complex, and difficult to resolve. The conclusion of the Apostolic Visitation remained evasive on this subject, leaving to the religious assistant the task of applying in detail what it stated in a very general way:

For the peace and unity of the Congregation, no Father will be involved in the formation and instruction of the Sisters except within the limits set and controlled by the religious assistant.

The rest of the text written by Father Paul Philippe did not allow to doubt the people concerned:

In my report to the Sacred Congregation of Religious," he said, "I made a point of paying tribute to the safety of the teaching

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I have decided to ask that the choice of the Fathers and the distribution of the subjects be placed under the high direction of the religious assistant. But I have deemed it necessary to ask that the choice of Fathers and the distribution of subjects be placed henceforth under the high direction of the religious assistant. The Sacred Congregation of Religious has ratified this proposal.

The obvious tribute to Father Calmel's work was veiled by a reservation, real but not explicit.

On November 5, 1954, when he had completed the details of the application of the conclusions of the apostolic visit, Father Marie-Joseph Nicolas addressed this delicate subject, without hiding his embarrassment:

I would like to end this communication with this. But I am obliged to add to the letter from Father Philippe in which the conclusions of the visit were explained to you. You have seen in it that I had the responsibility of designating and controlling the Fathers who would take care of you. I will not hide from you that my intention was to continue to trust Father Calmel for his courses of religious and spiritual formation which had been expressly approved by the visiting Father. But the Sacred Congregation has judged otherwise: it finds it wiser to interrupt his ministry to you now. I see no other way to explain this measure, which causes me great personal pain and which will be keenly felt by the greatest number of you, than by quoting to you in full, according to the permission I have obtained, the letter I

received from Father Larraona, Secretary General of the Congregation of religious:

“My Most Reverend Father,

This Sacred Congregation has appreciated the dedication with which you have accepted to become the religious assistant of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus, and it counts on you to help this institute lead its religious and apostolic life in fervor and peace. You have asked this holy dicastery if the Reverend Father Calmel o.p. could keep, under your supervision, some ministry in this Congregation. Without ignoring the great services he has rendered by his theological and spiritual teaching as well as by

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the apostolic and religious fervor that he has fostered in souls, following the apostolic visitation of last June, it seems preferable for the peace of the Congregation that his not sufficiently limited role come to an end. By this measure, the Sacred Congregation does not intend to approve all the complaints which had provoked the canonical visitation and most of which proved to be unfounded. Please accept, Reverend Father, the expression of my devoted sentiments.

P. Larraona.”

When Rome speaks,” continued Father Nicolas, “it is silence and obedience, in faith and in peace, that are appropriate. Father Calmel will give you an example of this, as several of his brothers did not long ago, in very serious and painful circumstances. Let us not overemphasize Rome’s intentions either, let us not see blame where she has expressly wanted to praise. Above all, let us not see a change in the

orientation given to the Congregation by Mother General, with the doctrinal help of Father Calmel. The only changes requested are those that have been explicitly mentioned. As for the rest, I feel that you are in line with the Church, and this should be a powerful encouragement to you, I feel a sadness threatening the Congregation. Chase it away, trust in God. He will be with you if you know how to overcome every kind of resentment.

In fact, this decision was felt very painfully by a great number of Sisters of the Congregation, and very particularly by Mother Hélène Jamet.

Nevertheless, as soon as he received Father Nicolas' explanations, Father Calmel left the Congregation, after having written on the blackboard, at the end of the last course he gave to the novices of Montréjeau and which he entitled "farewell course", these words taken from the psalms:

Donec transeat iniquitas... Waiting for injustice to end...
(Ps.)

Frustra jacitur rete ante pedes pennatorum... In vain are nets spread before the feet of those who have wings...
(Prov.)

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The suffering of Father and Mother Hélène in this situation was immediately enshrined in a painful but serene grandeur of soul. Father Calmel enjoined the Sisters not to seek to avenge the injustice, but to strive for holiness in fidelity to Article 291 of the Constitutions: "firm in faith and love for the children".

In spite of the disciplinary sanction, the Constitutions remained the norm of holiness for the Sisters, and in this lay the victory of Father Calmel and Mother Hélène. The severity of the Church only affected the behavior of individuals, without ever specifying the exact nature of the reproaches, but by giving precedence to “the good of peace” in the Congregation and the union of the members. On the other hand, his praise for the new constitutions was clear-cut, reducing to nothing the accusations of substance and even of canonical form which those who had formulated them had already renounced.

Supported by the certainty of being in the exact line of the tradition of their institute and encouraged by the verdict of the Church, the Sisters should have begun to write a serene page of their history, in spite of the scars left by recent events. But it was not to be...

PART 2

1954-1971:

THE CONGREGATION IN THE CONCILIAR TURMOIL

Introduction

To write the history of the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus from 1954 to 1971 is to follow, during this period, the evolutions and changes that marked the Church and society, and their repercussions on religious apostolic life.

The historical documents, preserved in the private archives of the Congregation as well as in the official archives of the Church, evoke the effervescence of a period that aroused immense enthusiasm in some, a concern that gradually turned into stupor in others.

The history of women's religious congregations in the last twenty years has been marked by some events that have changed the traditional conception of religious life: on October 28, 1965, the decree *Perfecta Caritatis* of the Second Vatican Council was published with the aim of promoting a "renewal and adaptation of religious life". After defining the general principles of this immense task, the decree drew the following conclusion:

It is necessary, therefore, to revise the constitutions, directories, customary law and other similar documents in an appropriate manner, eliminating what is obsolete and conforming to the documents of the Council.

On August 6, 1966, Paul VI's *motu proprio Ecclesiae Sanctae* gave more detailed guidelines:

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- The principal role in the renewal and adaptation of religious life belongs to the institutes themselves, acting mainly through the general chapters.

- In order to undertake this adapted renewal in each institute, a special general chapter, ordinary or extraordinary, will meet within the next two or, at most, three years.

- This General Chapter has the power to modify, as an experiment, certain prescriptions of the constitutions, provided that the purpose, nature, and character of the institute are respected.

The pope added in the conclusion of his *motu proprio* the particular wish that this work of renewal begin without delay in all institutes. Nevertheless, aware of the difficulty of the task, he added recommendations of prudence, advising the nuns to proceed by experiment. Afterwards, the habit was adopted of calling this time a period of experimentation. The term is even found in the documents of the Apostolic See. "The term was probably poorly chosen, as it could lead to ambiguity," wrote the Jesuit Father Dortel-Claudot, who was responsible for helping the women religious congregations in this work of renewal.

In fact, some institutes believed, no doubt in good faith, that they had been granted, with the blessing of the Church, a kind of "Mardi Gras" of several years where one could allow oneself anything 1 .

It was *aggiornamento*.

Was the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus affected by these directives? In 1954, the Congregation had just completed the reform of its own constitutions, according to the wish of Pope Pius XII. In a way, it had already made its

aggiornamento. The relatively late date of the decree in relation to the revision of its constitutions completed in 1953 could lead one to believe that it no longer had to concern itself with this matter.

1 - Michel Dortel-Claudot, s.j., La vie religieuse apostolique depuis Vatican II, un témoignage, Médiasévres, Cahiers de vie religieuse, n° 131, 2005, p. 12.

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per. But in reality, the decree was the culmination and the legal form of a desire for change which had been stirring the Church for many years and which, in the last years of the pontificate of Pope Pius XII, was taking a new direction. Also, because of this new orientation, the question had to be asked from a particular angle.

From 1954 to 1967, the two Superiors General who led the Congregation were confronted with an original question: did the reform, barely completed, need to be reformed?

It seems that the Holy Name of Jesus was one of the rare Congregations to have to ask itself this question: few institutes - none that we know of - responded so quickly to the invitation of Pope Pius XII at the congress of religious in Rome in 1950. This first congress of states of perfection had drawn the attention of religious institutes to the need to adapt their customs to the new conditions of life linked to the transformations of society. Was the work accomplished by Mother Helene and Father Calmel sufficient? Had the will of the Church, expressed in pontifical documents, been understood and applied?

It is therefore first of all in the light of the decree *Perfectæ Caritatis* already cited, a reflection of the pontifical directives, that the two generalates of Mother Marie-Angélique Lescouzère (1954-1961) and Mother Marie-Rose Tassy (1961-1967) must be studied. For the mandate of Mother Marie-Angélique, we must ask ourselves if the application of the 1953 reform which she tried to promote was indeed an anticipation of the decree; for that of Mother Marie-Rose, if the Congregation reflected the general evolution of the religious institutes for women reformed by this decree.

1

The *Perfectæ Caritatis* decree

The decree *Perfectæ Caritatis* was written with the aim of promoting a “renewal and adaptation of religious life”. The whole text offers first of all a general presentation of the latter. It recalls its primary goal in its preamble: The search for perfect charity appears as a shining sign of the kingdom of heaven.

This idea was taken from the constitution *Lumen Gentium*, taken from the Second Vatican Council, on the Church, in chapter 6.

The text of the decree then presents elements for reflection on the criteria for renovation and its modalities. In many passages, it expresses a very traditional doctrine:

- The separation of the religious from the world is specified:

The members of any institute will remember principally that by the profession of the evangelical counsels they have responded to a divine vocation so that, not only dead to sin but also renouncing the world, they live only for God alone.

They have in fact dedicated their lives entirely to his service; and this constitutes precisely a particular consecration which is intimately rooted in the consecration of baptism and expresses it more fully.

- The necessary union of the religious with Christ through the sacraments and prayer is then recalled:

That in all circumstances they apply themselves to the hidden life in God with Christ... Consequently, they cultivate

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...] They will celebrate the holy liturgy... and they will nourish their spiritual life from this inexhaustible source [of the Holy Eucharist], thus being restored to the table of the Eucharist. (...) They will celebrate the holy liturgy (...) and they will nourish their spiritual life from this inexhaustible source [of the holy Eucharist], restored in this way to the table of the divine law and the holy altar (...).

- From this union with Christ will flow a fruitful apostolate:

Their apostolic activity must derive from their intimate union

The decree then speaks of the need for reform in religious institutes. It was obvious that many religious institutes were in need of reform and renovation 2 . The history of Christianity shows how the Church is alive and has always sought to protect religious orders from sclerosis. In religious life, the greatest danger seems to come from the routine habit that kills the most pious traditions.

Doesn't this thought developed in the decree remind us of Father Calmel's intuitions, and don't some of the

Dominican's texts appear as premonitions of the Pope's thought?

Among the changes suggested by the decree, we should note the call for better doctrinal and spiritual formation of members. This desire is expressed in paragraph 11:

Let the superiors therefore take serious care that formation, especially spiritual formation, be given to them and continue afterwards

Father Calmel had also formulated this requirement. It is found in a great number of articles of the 1953 Constitutions. It is clearly expressed, for example, in article 285: Even after the years of formation and until their death, the Sisters will continue to devote themselves to a disinterested study, which does not mean dilettante or fanciful, but which

The Perfectæ Caritatis 125 decree

to deepen their religious knowledge and their human culture without seeking immediate usefulness, while not losing sight of their mission to the young girls. The Sisters will not fail to help each other in this study. The personal work of the Sisters, helped by the community meetings, should become for them a factor of balance and unity of life.

The decree Perfectæ Caritatis calls for a greater unity between religious life and apostolic life, so as not to separate what in itself forms a whole. Paragraph 8 states:

That is why all religious life must be imbued with the apostolic spirit and all apostolic action must be animated by the religious spirit.

This interpenetration must take place in prayer. Numerous texts already quoted have shown to what extent this was also the reform desired by Father and Mother Helene: that the timetable, the religious activities, be compatible with the teaching life - better, support it, flesh it out. Another excerpt from the decree, saying that

Institutes must therefore judiciously adapt their observances and practices to the needs of the apostolate which is incumbent upon them (§8)

recalls the reforms implemented in the Congregation: freedom of hour for prayer, common office for some liturgical hours only and not for all, apostolic conception of silence, suppression of chapter "rituals" of the congregations such as proclamations, and in a general way, suppression of monastic pomp, incompatible with an apostolic life.

Finally, the decree calls for a revision of the customs, of the somewhat outdated habits: clothes and practices that are not in keeping with recent lifestyles must be revised, as paragraph 3 calls for. This aspect of things had also been foreseen by Father Calmel who had sought greater simplicity in the organization of daily life.

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However, the text of the decree also presents other modifications, far from a traditional conception of religious life, showing a rupture that the reform of Father Calmel and Mother Hélène had not envisaged.

The two main new features are as follows:

1) The idea that an effective renovation can only be achieved through the participation of all members in this reform:

An effective renovation and a just adaptation can only be obtained with the cooperation of all the members, as paragraph 4 affirms. The text speaks of a new concept of authority that is only as strong as the unanimity of the members. 11 advocates assemblies, meetings, federations, a whole set of organizations that are very reminiscent of the collegiality of the Council, the democratization of the Church. In a traditional conception of religious life, the opinion of all the members does not have the same weight: the authority has a power distinct from that of the members.

This novelty had consequences. From the material point of view, it led to the elaboration of numerous questionnaires and forms, and to the multiplication of “sharing assemblies”. The *motu proprio Ecclesiae Sanctae* had recommended, in line with the decree *Perfectae Caritatis*, “a wide consultation of religious” following which

the General Council will draw up the results so that the work of the Chapter can be facilitated and oriented. This can be done, for example, by consulting local and provincial chapters, appointing commissions, sending out questionnaires,

Looking back, Father Dortel-Claudot said in 2005

For the first time in the history of religious life, a free consultation was organized on such a vast scale and embracing questions of such magnitude! So there was indeed

The *Perfectae Caritatis* decree

clumsiness in the way of proceeding and especially in the way of evaluating the results of the consultations: this was somewhat inevitable 3 .

From a deeper point of view, this novelty had the consequence of proposing to the reflection of Sisters who had never been troubled by it, debates that could be thorny. The most diverse opinions were communicated to the superiors, sometimes confronted, in the words of Father Dortel-Claudot,

to a restless base in a hurry to get their demands met.

Such a conception of authority, and especially of collegial participation in the exercise of authority, is not to be found in any of the texts written by Father Calmel, nor in the constitutions of 1953. It is interesting to note that the latter had been written and then proposed as an experiment to the Congregation. The memoirs of Father Dortel-Claudot evoke a very different procedure where the experimentation was to precede the writing of the constitutions.

2) The other very new idea, in rupture with the tradition of the Church, was the haste, the urgency with which these reforms were advocated, and especially their peremptory character. The decree suggests the urgent need to change everything: “directories, customs, books of prayers, ceremonies and other collections of the same kind...” (§ 3). “(§ 3) No hierarchy of values is really evoked, nor does the possibility of preserving what the past has transmitted of good appear. Moreover, the proposed renewal must be carried out “in conformity with the documents of the Council”, as the decree indicates in paragraph 3. In the past, however, the Church was accustomed to inscribing its

reforms in the continuity of previous magisterial works. It did not limit itself to the expression of the last Council. The precipitation, grafted on an interference of authority and on a bias for novelty in

fichel Dortel-Claudot, op. rit p. 13.

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This made the application of these directives very difficult in certain Congregations.

Finally, it is possible to note a large number of ambiguities in this decree. Some passages that are not precise enough leave the door open to many changes:

- From the introduction, religious life is presented as “a shining sign of the kingdom of God”. True as a secondary consequence of religious life, this idea can present neither the goal of religious life which is “the glory of God, perfect charity through the practice of the vows of obedience, chastity, poverty”, nor a precise definition.
- A true renewal of the external forms of religious life can only be the extension of an interior reform. It is mentioned in the text, but nowhere is it clearly defined. It would undoubtedly have been useful to present this necessity with precision.
- In the otherwise very classical presentation of the three wishes, one or two demands often slip in, suggesting an individualistic claim:
- In the area of chastity, the decree specifies that “they [religious] are to be formed in such a way that they assume

celibacy consecrated to God, integrating it into the development of their personality” (§ 12).

- The same remark applies to the vow of poverty: “Let each one of them,” the text explains, “in his work, feel bound by the common law of work... thus providing himself with what is necessary...” (§ 13) A more classical conception of the vow of poverty would have evoked abandonment to Providence.

- Finally, obedience seems to be ordered to the fulfillment of the human person: “Thus obedience, far from diminishing the dignity of the human person, leads him to maturity...” (§14)

It is certain that such a statement is not entirely false; it is even right if it is in its place in the hierarchy of values. Thus, religious life - and especially the practice of the vows which

U decree Perfectæ Caritatis

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It is first of all ordered to the glory of God, then to the sanctification of the religious, and finally to external witness. But there is in the renewal proposed by the decree a certain variation of substance which forgets what Romano Amerio calls “the verticality” of religious life:

This fundamental change is part of the anthropotropic evolution that characterizes the present moment of the Church, writes the historian, relying on the speeches of the Congress of the Union of Superiors General, held in Grottaferrata in May 1981 5 . The ultimate conclusions of this thinking, which the historian denounces, are not present in the papal document we are studying, but the novelty of some of the reflections certainly opens the way to what

happened later. The concept of authority is modified. With regard to chapters and councils, it is specified that

these bodies, each in its own way, express the participation and interest of all the members in the good of the whole community (§14).

Finally, a more general remark can be made: the desire for renovation is presented in an untraditional way. It seems to result from a desire to adapt the institute, its ends and its means, to changing mentalities. A more traditional conception would have proposed to adapt modern mentalities to the unchanging essentials. In the texts of her magisterium, the Church often reminds us that it is the explanation that is given that must be adapted so that the observances are not imposed from the outside. When the essential is sufficiently alive, the accessory can be modified without fear to be a better means at the service of the essential.

The two Superiors General of the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus therefore had to confront the reform, already in place, with the

5 - Novel

erio, op. cit. p. 276.

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This was confirmed by the laudatory decree of the Holy See, with the demands of a “national pastoral ministry” in favor of the *aggiornamento* of religious congregations in the light of Vatican Council II.

Before studying these two Generalates, a remark is in order: the decree that has just been presented was not promulgated until 1965, that is, towards the end of the second of these two mandates. Nevertheless, it is not rash to mention its content, because this famous “national pastoral ministry” which was definitively expressed in the official text published on that date, had begun to be exercised long before and had tried to promote these reforms from the aftermath of the Second World War, as Professor Jean de Viguerie’s study of the 1950s shows.⁷

It is therefore necessary to go back to the end of the generalate of Mother Hélène Jamet to follow the evolution of the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus in the context of this pastoral ministry.

that the bishops of the different countries will adopt, we understand the whole of the directives proposed to the Catholics by the hierarchy of the Church during or after the Second Vatican Council. The term “pastoral” was in fact used a lot from that moment on to designate the ministry of bishops or priests to the faithful without reference to a dogmatic or theological norm. It is for this reason that the Second Vatican Council was defined as pastoral and not dogmatic.

7 - Jean de Viguerie, “U crise de l’Église en France dans les années 1950 et 1951 “. Bulletin of the French society of history of ideas and religious history, n° 13, 2003.

3

The Generalate of Mother Marie-Angélique

On November 4, 1954, Mother Hélène sent a circular to the Sisters of the Congregation in which she announced the

convocation of the General Chapter of Election 8 . She also announced her decision not to accept a possible re-election.

Believe me,” she wrote, “that this is not a refusal to serve, but rather a conviction that, in the present circumstances, I cannot, in this place, serve you as much as I can still do under obedience. We have, at least most of us, the habit of explaining ourselves to each other in the light, believe well that I will not fail to do so with you.

In support of her decision, she referred to the letter of Reverend Father Nicholas and the new communication from Rome that this letter transmitted, thus justifying her step. One paragraph of this letter thanked the Sisters for the confidence they had placed in their Mother General to walk with her, especially at a time almost as difficult as this: the Pentecost 1952 referendum.

The recent reform of the Constitutions, approved by Rome and led by Father Calmel and Mother Hélène Jamet, had

8 - See p. 35.

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created a climate in the Congregation marked both by a great impetus to deepen the religious teaching life and by the seeds of discord surrounding the practical details of this reform. A complaint was lodged against Father Calmel. It led to the apostolic visit that we know about, the conclusion of which was the removal of Father Calmel from the Congregation's apostolate. Such a disavowal, even though it was counterbalanced by the warmest praise for the work accomplished, was painfully felt by Mother Hélène who had

placed all her confidence in the Father and had given him a mandate to work in the Congregation.

A few excerpts from the report on the persons, written by Mother Helene on the occasion of the preliminary session of the General Chapter of November 1954, make this suffering sensitive: evoking the Roman approval which gave great security to the work undertaken for the reform of the Constitutions, Mother emphasized that this approval “[had] arrived without any human support and when (we see it more clearly now) many enemy forces were militating in the opposite direction”. The last paragraph of this review expressed the gratitude of the Superior General towards her Sisters, with a certain reserve however:

Here, she said, is the outline of the reform we have been working on with all our heart. I thank you very much for your active docility, at least on the whole, in walking in a direction that seemed to me to be necessary, as I told you these days, in all apostolic rigor, but which is not of any rest.

If I urge you not to reelect me, please believe that it is not to find this rest, but to serve more effectively under obedience the work undertaken.

It was thus in a tense atmosphere that the General Chapter of 1954 opened, during which Mother Marie-Angélique Lescouzère was legitimately elected. Her generalate was therefore a continuation of these difficult years.

The Generalate of Mother Marie-Angélique 133

A consultation of the circular letters that the Superior addressed to the Sisters of the Congregation from the beginning of her mandate allows us to affirm that at no time was the reform of the Constitutions carried out by Mother Hélène and Father Calmel called into question. On April 1,

1955, Mother Marie-Angélique asked the prioresses the following question: “What have we done with our new constitutions? On June 23, 1960, Father Marie-Joseph Nicolas confirmed the Congregation in the observance of these new constitutions. He wrote to the Sisters: Since I was named religious assistant to your Congregation, I have been concerned with you only through the Mother General and her Council...; I must now see to it that the Constitutions are put into practice according to the directives and spirit of the canonical visitation of 1954...

All the documents consulted concerning the years 1954-1960 allow us to reduce the work of Mother General in favor of her Congregation to two main axes: she seems to have wanted

- to reassure Sisters, students or friends of the Congregation who were worried about the new orientations, fearing a break with the past and the traditions of the Institute, and at the same time to promote the application of the new constitutions;

- to show that these reforms were to be a principle of unity for the Congregation and an opportunity to rekindle zeal in the service of the Church, because they were part of the general impetus that animated it.

A first document is precious in order to know the Congregation better at the beginning of Mother Marie-Angélique's generalate: the Acts of the General Chapter of November 1954. According to the canonical directives, all General Chapters begin with a preliminary session during which the Superior General who is completing her mandate presents a report on the persons and on the practice of the Rule. A com

Rupture or fiile

mission of elected Sisters is then charged with the examination of this relationship: it must give its approval or not on the balance sheet of the last six years. In her presentation, Mother Hélène spoke of “all the efforts of [her] six years as Generalate to make the Rule as it is truly serve the religious state of teaching sisters. She developed the six major themes around which the new constitutions had tried to organize the reform:

- the form of the religious state deliberately active through teaching and education;
- the clearly apostolic nature of the work by respecting the proper laws of a teaching work in the Christian regime - the clear definition of the attachment to the Order;
- the juridical organization which makes the prioress responsible for her house in all areas: prayer life, teaching work, material things;
- the search and the effort to base community life on the real bonds of a common apostolate and not on the false bonds of a kindness in a vacuum;
- the sense of responsibility of an active religious in charge of souls, capable of taking in hand personally her prayer, her correspondence, her gift to God.

The report of the commission charged with examining this relationship recalled once again the almost total unanimity of the Congregation around Mother Helene:

As for the report at the end of the Generalate, it is what we expected: we have lived it day by day during these last years in the joyful awareness of a fundamental renewal and in the enthusiasm that truth gives. But we have also seen in a harsh light the demands of this

Our membership, which was total, could certainly have been more generous, but the momentum is there. For many, our life

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of teacher appeared to us in such a light and such a greatness that it was a discovery. There is a grace there for us to which we want, with a firm will, to be faithful, with a loyalty worthy of that of which, my Reverend Mother, you have given us such a perfect example. Such beautiful results had to be paid for by great sufferings. Believe, my Mother, that we suffer with you; may our fidelity, in the way traced by you, be your reward.

The signatories were Mother Marie-Rose Tassy, Mother Mariède-Jésus Tarride and Mother Marie-Suzanne Bonneton. The very personal, very warm aspect of this report is unprecedented in the history of the Congregation.

Mother Marie-Angélique clearly wanted to continue the work of Mother Hélène in order to anchor the Congregation in the practice of the new constitutions.

In reading her circulars, it is possible to note in the Superior General first of all a desire to be faithful, which appears very humble, to the impulse given. On April 1, 1955, she wrote to the prioresses of the Congregation;

What have we done with our new constitutions? This is what we, responsible before God for the Congregation, have the duty to ask ourselves, while being well aware that, since we were not formed to religious life with these constitutions, if we want them to inform our work, we must tackle the task of making a new novitiate together - mothers and daughters.

Several circulars invited the Sisters to reflect on this or that aspect of the Constitutions. Thus, on July 5, 1955, the Superior evoked, in the light of articles 376, 383, 385 and 409, the role of the house councils and that of the General Council. She wished that these councils

make the Congregation better understand, through the decisions taken, what a reform is that is incarnated, how the renewal it brings passes into life.

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As another example, the letter of March 7, 1957 was an invitation to meditate on the articles of the constitutions on silence. It recalled, with the help of the text of the constitutions, not only the nature of this silence “made up of recollection and conversation with God”, but also the “wise regulation” which establishes an indispensable but appropriate external silence.

While emphasizing the new requirements of the reform, Mother Marie-Angélique also tried to show that these were only the blossoming of previous traditions, and that there was therefore no reason to worry about modifications that were in no way a break with the past. She reassured, for example, the former students:

Former students, who remain so faithfully attached to the spirit in which you were brought up, we think you will be happy to know what is the present line of the house which is still yours. The following presentation will try to tell you. It has not been made with you in mind, as its title indicates, but it will make clear to you how our educational effort is increasingly oriented and how we understand Christian teaching...

In a symbolic way, at the end of her generalate, Mother Marie-Angélique presided over the ceremony of blessing the new novitiate, even though vocations were not very abundant: Under the first stone that Bishop Théas blessed, the Sisters placed a paving stone from the courtyard of the Régans, the first house of the Congregation; a bag of earth taken in Toulouse from the courtyard of the house of St. Dominic, from the tombs of the Reverend Mothers Justine Robert, Hélène Daguzan, Henri-Dominique Destenay, from that of Mother Marie-Xavier Durant and from the garden of Montréjeau 9; finally, a piece of wood detached from the beam of the room where, in Castelnau, the

9 - See, by the same author, *Histoire de la Congrégation du Saint-Nom de Jésus de Toulouse, 1800-1953*, Toulouse, Privât, 2005.

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General Chapter which had approved the new constitutions. "So," concluded Mother Marie-Irène in the letter that recounted this ceremony,

The past and the present are symbolically united in the foundations of the novitiate which carries the future of the Congregation.

The message was clear.

At the same time that she sought to reaffirm the continuity of the new constitutions with the traditions of the Congregation, Mother Marie-Angélique also worked to show the manifest insertion of this reform in the current of renewal that had been stirring the Church for several years already.

If the decree *Perfectæ Caritatis* was not to be written until ten years after the beginning of this generalate, many events and texts were already preparing it in the 1950s. The first Congress of the States of Perfection, convened by Pope Pius XII in 1950, had itself been preceded in France by a great number of initiatives whose purpose was to reflect on the modalities of religious life.

In 1930, the nuns devoted to hospital and social works had organized a first meeting, under the direction of Bishop Brot, auxiliary bishop of Cardinal Verdier, archbishop of Paris. This union of the nuns of hospital and social action had been formed when they had become aware of the fact that their charitable works were subject to laws, and that official diplomas had become necessary to exercise them. This union wanted to allow each of the Congregations to find an official place in the modern world by continuing to respond to their needs.

Nine years later, in 1939, the teaching nuns also tried to establish, among all the Congregations devoted to this apostolate, a spirit of collaboration to respond to the difficulties of teaching in the face of modern mentalities. The Union of Teaching Sisters - URE - was born. From its inception

When it was founded, it included two hundred and fifty congregations, among which was the Holy Name of Jesus.

A few years later, a new organization was created, this time for all religious and members of secular institutes who collaborated with the parish clergy. In 1947, the Union des religieuses éducatrices paroissiales - UREP - further broadened the scope of common reflection.

Finally, in 1955, the superiors of the women's congregations in France decided to form a union of major superiors - USMF - to coordinate this immense organization. Barely two years after its foundation, this union had representatives from more than three hundred and eighty institutes.

Although relatively small in the midst of the countless number of French women's religious congregations at the beginning of the 20th century, the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus was well known and appreciated, at least in the south of France. A review by the historian Claude Langlois ranks it fourteenth in the list of the most important congregations in France at the end of the 19th century.¹⁰ This somewhat abstract calculation is not surprising, since it does not take into account the fact that the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus was not only the most important congregation in France, but also the most important in the world. This somewhat abstract calculation is based on the resources of the institutes, a reflection of the interest of the population and a guarantee of its success. It would place the Holy Name of Jesus on an almost equal footing with Congregations that are much better known in France: the Assumption, the Sacred Heart, Picpus, the Little Sisters of the Poor.

It is therefore not surprising to find her name in the archives of these unions, from their formation. Mother Hélène Jamet

had participated in the congresses of the major superiors. It seems that she was present in Rome, in 1950, at the one that Pope Pius XII organized to deal with the states of perfection. The message

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of the pope had been heard, and put into practice by the Superior General: this is the origin of the reform undertaken.

Between 1954 and 1967, it seems that the Union of Major Superiors of Women's Religious Institutes was mainly concerned with the school question, and in particular with the specific point of contracts with the State.

The archives of this union of major superiors evoke in fact the reflection carried out in those years on the place that religious teaching congregations could hold in the French school landscape of the mid-20th century. Before being an intellectual debate, this reflection answered a question of a purely material nature: the financing of private schools.

The Third Republic had established free, secular and compulsory schooling, thus creating two models of schooling in France: one, secular and subsidized by the State; the other, religious and therefore private, without material support from the State. In 1941, the Vichy regime had clearly favored Catholic education: the law of November 2, 1941, for example, authorized the departments to grant subsidies to private establishments; the provisions of the law of 1901 concerning the Congregations were relaxed and those of the Combes law of 1904, prohibiting teaching to Congregationalists, were repealed. But these provisions were in turn quickly repealed. In 1946, the Fourth Republic revived the school dispute by including in the preamble to its constitution the obligation of the State to provide secular

education throughout the country. Despite this decision, it was not specified that the school had to be unique for all. Thus, there remained two schools - public and private. In the middle of the 20th century, in terms of number of students, the two were almost equivalent. But since 1945, the private school no longer received any subsidy. This situation led to the mobilization of

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some politicians of the time. Thus, in 1948, the Poinso-Chapuis decrees offered aid for the schooling of children from needy families, even in private education. In 1951, the Marie and Barangé laws extended the state scholarship system to private school students and established the principle of a monthly allowance per student in both public and private schools.

Aware of the fragile situation of private education in France, the episcopate and the Vatican sought from 1952 onwards to establish its place in the educational context of the time in a clear and lasting way. Discreet negotiations took place with the parties in power, notably with the Christian Democratic MRP and the Socialist SFIO. Although these negotiations were not directly successful, they paved the way for the Debré Law, which was promulgated on December 31, 1959. General De Gaulle's prime minister thought he could settle the conflict between public and private schools: he created "contracts" with his law. Private schools signing a contract with the State had to adopt the public education programs and teach them under the same conditions as secular schools. They had to respect freedom of conscience, while keeping their own character. In

exchange, they could receive state funding to cover most of their personnel and operating costs.

It was not up to Mother Marie-Angélique to commit the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus to contracts. The law was still too recent. But the end of her Generalate was marked by this question which was regularly raised in the assemblies of the URE or in the internal meetings of the Congregation.

In a more profound way, the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus, under the generalate of Mother Marie-Angélique, reflects quite well the “glorious face” of the pontificate of Pope Pius XII.

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The reform of 1953 was in line with this apostolic and missionary zeal of a radiant Church. Certainly, the situation in France and in many European countries was difficult at the time, but Catholics were numerous, enterprising, and proud of their faith. The voice of the Church was heard by all, and events in the Catholic world were echoed throughout the world. This apogee of the Church, described by so many contemporaries”, crowns the combined effort of all the popes of the first half of the 20th century in favor of anti-modernism, of what historians of the history of the Church will soon call fundamentalism, opposing it to modernism as one would oppose one heresy to another. However, this “fundamentalism” has nothing to do with heresy. It is, to use the words of Bishop Fenton in 1949, “the most important thing in the world,

the teaching or behavior of those who have worked for the presentation of an integral Catholicism, that is, of Catholic dogma established in a precise and exhaustive manner. The

name “fundamentalism” has been used more frequently for the doctrine and viewpoint of those writers who entered into polemics against the modernists in the first decade of the present century. Taken in this sense, fundamentalism has been nothing more than the contradiction of heretical modernism. It has been in substance nothing more than the exposition of Catholic truth. (...) If, as is customary in our country, the word “fundamentalism” is applied to specific anti-modernist teaching, then fundamentalism is nothing other than the expression of Catholic truth, which involves the denial of errors that are incompatible with the divine message of the Catholic Church.¹²

The attachment to Catholic doctrine through the precise exposition of the dogmas, the concern for the splendor of the liturgy, the desire to be a part of the

11 - Jean de Viguerie, “La crise de l’Église en France dans les années 1950 et 1951 d’après un document inédit”, in Bulletin de la Société française d’histoire des idées et d’histoire religieuse , n° 13, p. 7.

12 - J. C. Fenton, “Two Currents in Contemporary Catholic Thought”, in The American Ecclesiastical Review, vol. 119 (1948), p. 297-298.

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he missionary zeal supported by the certainty of the infallibility of the Church, its durability in time and its universality, are like the leitmotiv of all those who led the Church from Leo XIII to Pius XII. Their certainties were affirmed in numerous encyclicals: insistent reminders of the popes in favor of the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas, numerous encouragements to the regular practice of the

sacraments in the liturgical life of the Church, pressing appeals in favor of missionary vocations, and rebukes of contemporary errors, all of these elements of the teaching of the popes punctuate the pontifical documents

A recent historian of the Second Vatican Council describes this atmosphere in a few lines:

This doctrine, spread throughout the world from the chair of Peter, was given a splendor never before known in history by the ceremonies full of magnificence. When the aisles of St. Peter's resounded with the chants of the liturgy according to the ancient Roman rite, and the Pope, blessing, advanced into the basilica between the flabelta, seated on the sedia gestatoria, escorted by the noble guard wearing the red uniform, the imagination was, at this spectacle, struck by the beauty of the truth ¹³ .

It is easy to find, in the very text of the constitutions of the Institute of the Holy Name of Jesus, the mark of those years that could be called doctrinal, when the official teaching of the pontiffs, diffused throughout the universal Church, was a constant exhortation to a certain adherence of the spirit to the revealed truths and to the multisecular tradition of the magisterium. On the occasion of the canonization of Pope Pius X, Mother Hélène Jamet herself had stressed in a circular to the Sisters the attachment of the Congregation to the directives of the

13 - Roberto de Mattéi, Vatican I, a history to be told

i 2013,

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Popes and the obvious repercussions of these directives in the new constitutions:

I see the canonization of Blessed Pope Pius X coming with great joy," she wrote. In addition to the gratitude owed to him by the whole Church, we have with him, personally and as a Congregation, numerous and solid bonds of gratitude and affection. I want to remind you of some of them so that we may have more reasons to rejoice and pray together.

It is to him first of all that many of us, like myself, owe the fact that we received the body of Christ at a very young age, and our immense joy as fulfilled children is still very new. We will sing it to him on this 29th of May with all our little girls who, since the decrees of 1905 and 1910 M , have had the same happiness every year.

It was also he who, at a very serious time for religious congregations, oriented ours in a clearly apostolic way. The answer he gave to Reverend Father Cormier is recorded in Father Cathala's brochure and we have never read it without a feeling of security and apostolic impetus: "The souls of the little children of France are well worth the heroic sacrifices made in their favor 15 .

Finally, on June 25, 1952, we arrived in Rome with our new Constitutions, seeking guidance and help from the Roman Congregations. At the tomb of Pius X we found the assurance that his protection was assured and that he would be our firm support and powerful help. It is therefore with filial joy and a heart full of thanksgiving that we rejoice at this canonization. With

H - Cf., Pico X, decree on daily communion, December 20, 1905; decree

first encyclical E supremi apostolatus-. "In our day, it is only too true, nations have shuddered and peoples have meditated foolish schemes against their creator; and almost

common has become this cry of his enemies: withdraw from us! Hence, in most, a total rejection of all respect for God. Hence habits of life, so much effort nor artifice that one does not implement to abolish entirely his memory and even his notion. “

15 - Father Cathala, op. cit. p. 64.

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a total confidence, we will ask Blessed Pius X for the graces we particularly need: an ever-increasing apostolic fervor, vocations sufficiently numerous to allow us to balance our life as teaching nuns with fervor and to truly serve souls “in all circles, beginning with the poorest” (Constitutions, articles 230,106, 261) ; zeal for the acquisition and teaching of Christian doctrine; a contagious sense of orthodoxy and its consequences in our lives; a lively sense of the liturgy, all of which is made more urgent by the threat of an even more integral secularization of teaching in our country.¹⁶

The same echo is found in the circulars of Mother Marie-Angélique Lescouzère, regularly inciting the Sisters to the study of the doctrine of Saint Thomas, to the diffusion of a clearly Catholic teaching, marked by the demands of the faith, to the young girls entrusted to their apostolate, and to the practice of a revitalized liturgical life. On this very traditional basis, the reform of the Constitutions, desired by Mother Hélène and put in place by Mother Marie-Angélique, was built in full conformity with the directives of the Church and the impulses given by Pope Pius XII.

However, a remark is necessary.

When the mandate of the Superior General expired, the situation of women's religious institutes in the Church was no longer the same as in 1954. While the years 1954-1960 were dominated by a desire for renewal in the direction of religious tradition - and teaching for the Congregations whose particular end it was - the following decade was not afraid to break with very old customs. The concern to "update" the religious institutes went beyond the framework of an internal reform. The opening of the Second Vatican Council on October 11, 1962, gave this

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period its dominant note. Until its closure on December 8, 1965, the Council reflected the life of Catholics throughout the world. As many historians have shown, the Council was intended to set the Church on a new path - that of dialogue with the modern world. Pope John XXIII's inaugural address refers several times to this decision to adopt a new way of acting: The Church has never ceased to oppose [errors]. She has even often condemned them, and very severely. But today, the Bride of Christ prefers to use the remedy of mercy rather than the weapons of severity.

From the very beginning, the Pope gave the opening Council a pastoral rather than a doctrinal character, with the aim of better reaching the people who were far from the truth. As many historians have pointed out, one of the major breaks with previous Councils, perhaps even the main one, was the desire to affirm the primacy of pastoral ministry over doctrine. Such a change, so contrary to the habits and thinking of the Church, inexorably placed in the hands of the "post-council" the decisions taken in the Council hall, however precise they might have been otherwise.¹⁸

If we remember that Pope Pius XII died on the night of October 8-9, 1958, and if we consider that the new pope announced on January 25, 1959 his decision to convene a council according to

17 - In a spiritual conference addressed to the seminarians of Ecône on June 12, 1975, Archbishop Lefebvre evoked this question. He recalled that he himself had proposed to the Council Fathers that a dogmatic note be drawn up for each subject under discussion for priests, seminary professors and all those who would need doctrinal precision for their apostolic work, and that it be followed by

wanted to be solely pastoral. 11 also reports the answer of Bishop Felici, who was asked at the end of the sessions to specify the general note of the Council: doctrinal or pastoral. It depends on the texts," he said. It is not possible to say with precision. "

18 - These ideas are borrowed from Roberto de Mattéi, The Religious Crisis of Our Time, lecture given in Fanjeaux, July 22, 2014. Notes taken during his lecture

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In the light of the above criterion, one question must be asked: how could such a radical change have taken place so quickly? Did the last years of the pontificate of Pius XII present a double face? These reflections cannot be separated from the study of the generalate of Mother Marie-Rose Tassy who succeeded Mother Marie-Angélique Lescouzère in 1961. The new orientation that the Superior General gave to the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus, which caused so much turmoil and such a clear split among the Sisters, cannot be explained outside this very particular ecclesial context.

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An amazing election

Before studying this new Generalate in detail, we must mention a strange episode that is not mentioned in the archives of the Congregation, even though there are many oral testimonies about it.

According to the Constitutions, Mother Marie-Angélique's mandate was about to expire. As far as it was possible to decide in advance about the future votes that were to take place during the General Chapter of election, the majority of the Sisters of the Congregation assumed that she would be reelected. Although she was very discreet and reserved, and although the written documents she left were not very abundant, Mother General had won the confidence and esteem of the Sisters, especially because of her very faithful practice of the Constitutions and the personal demands of her religious life. All her Sisters," wrote one of those who knew her at that time, "remember her unalterable equality of temperament, her fundamental goodness, but also her demanding nature. For she was very demanding - too much so, some thought. Smiling and firm, she demanded a lot from her community, inexorably pointing out any slackening in this religious life that she herself, the first, lived fully, despite her very fragile health.

19 - *Nos racines du Ciel*, op. cit. p. 54. Testimony i

by Colette Beuffeuil.

The Sisters were also marked by the dedication that she had brought to the service of the Congregation and the Church, “totally forgetting herself”, according to the testimonies. It seemed to the Sisters that the votes of the General Chapter of 1961 would reelect her, despite her failing health: cancer would soon take her life on February 25, 1963.

However, again according to the testimony of the Sisters who were contemporaries of these years, and while “the Chapter was preparing to elect her for good 20 , it was Rome who intervened, imposing Mother Marie-Rose Tassy 21 “. The terseness of the testimony does not allow us to doubt the reality of the event. In fact, the archives of the Congregation preserve the report of the election. One can read the following account:

On June 30, 1961, Archbishop Garrone of Toulouse, in the presence of Reverend Father Nicolas, religious assistant of the Congregation, delivered to the capitulants gathered in the Chapter hall the decree number 01.355/54 of the Sacred Congregation of Religious, which determined the order to be followed for the elections, other than in the Constitutions. The ballots were immediately sent to Rome and the Chapter was suspended.

On July 11, at 4:00 p.m., the Archbishop read to the capitulants and then notified the community of the decisions of the Sacred Congregation which constituted the government:

- Reverend Mother General, Mother Marie-Rose Tassy
- First assistant, Mother Marie-Angélique Lescouzère
- Second assistant, mother Marie-Germaine Colliou
- Third assistant, Mother Jeanne-Thérèse Messal

- Fourth assistant, Mother Saint-François Assemat 22 .

What happened during the Chapter? While the Sisters had just voted according to custom, the delegate of the Holy See,

had chosen her following the refusal of mother Hélène Jamet to be reelected.

21 - Nos racines du Ciel, op. cit. p. 55.

22 - Archives of the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus of Fanjeaux, collection of Mother Magdeleine-de-Jésus Juès, folder n° 1.

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Archbishop Garrone, who was present at the meeting, announced that he would collect the ballots before they were even read, in order to send them to Rome and submit the election to the Holy See. Such a procedure was clearly contrary to the habits of the Congregation. All the other chapters had proceeded in the same way. According to articles 327 and 328 and 333 of the Constitutions in fact,

Each voter places her folded ballot in the ballot box. When all the ballots are deposited in the ballot box, the tellers open it, turn it upside down, count the tickets and compare them to the number of voters. If the number of ballots exceeds the number of voters present, they immediately burn them without unfolding them; the tellers unfold them, show them to the president, read aloud the name written on each ballot, and the secretaries write down the number of votes of each Sister. After the election, a secretary immediately writes the minutes of the election on the spot,

which are signed by the president, the tellers and the secretaries.

Contrary to the habits and laws of the Congregation, the uncounted ballots were sent to Rome. A few days later, and to everyone's surprise, the Congregation was notified of the election of Mother Marie-Rose Tassy as Superior General.

Who was she? Born in 1902, she entered the Congregation at a young age. A first assignment sent her to Marseilles and, shortly after, she was named director of the "petit Saint-Thomas" on the Corniche. In 1940, she was prioress at Tarbes. The Sisters of the Congregation presented her as a "small, smiling" Sister, endowed with a

a deep sense of listening and the gift of calming the most conflicting situations with delicacy and humor 23 .

23 - No:

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Appreciated, therefore, for her many qualities, she was not unaware that she was also sometimes judged harshly:

I believe I first met her when she became Prioress General in 1961," writes one Sister, "and I have verified all that I have been told about her. Kindness and welcome, yes, but above all humility, for she knew that many Sisters surpassed her in intelligence and culture, that some even did not find her quite equal to a Prioress General of the Holy Name of Jesus 24!

Why was it chosen by Rome? At this precise date? It is difficult to say. No document is clear enough to allow one to draw conclusions. The only possible historical approach to this period and this event is based on an analysis of the

letters that the bishops of the dioceses of France, in which the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus was established, exchanged during the 1960s. Most of them were astonished that the Congregation did not enter more resolutely into the “overall pastoral ministry” desired by the Council, as much on the subject of Catholic teaching as on that of religious life. Moreover, it is well known that Mother Marie-Rose was very close to Cardinal Garrone, Archbishop of Toulouse, who was particularly involved in the post-conciliar aggiornamento 2 . Is this sufficient to establish a link of cause and effect? No doubt the clue is rather tenuous, but the general decisions of the superiorate of the Reverend Mother were clearly in line with the new pastoral orientations.

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For there was indeed a change of direction in the directives of the Church hierarchy after the Second Vatican Council. In the history of the Congregation, this change remains linked to the figure of Mother Marie-Rose Tassy.

The new orientations of the Church

In 2005, on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary, the Commission of the Major Superiors of France presented the work done during this period of Church history in the following way: 1950-1970: 20 years separate the intuitions of Pius XII and the turning point that would be the first socio-economic approaches to French religious life. The rereading of this period allows us to measure the extraordinary rapidity of the evolution of religious life, an evolution that affected its structures of life, its relationship to the world, the religious mentality that inhabits it.

What were the milestones of these transformations?

The list of works of the permanent commission and the general assemblies of the Union of Major Superiors already offers a new panorama. In fact, the following issues were the object of reflection and debate

- in 1957: the problem of affectivity and infantilism among nuns;
- in 1958: health problems - medical card - medical bibliography; the attitude of nuns in foreign relations;
- in 1959: relaxation; information as a means of government; balanced diet;
- in 1960: the information that the Superior General must give to her Congregation, the meaning of work among the nuns, the

26 - CSM. Cinquante ans au service de la vie religieuse apostolique, 1955-2005, Paris, publication of the CSM (Conference of Major Superiors), 2005, p. 57.

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professional work in religious life, towards a more rational organization of work ;

- in 1961: the word and the silence, the hospital and social action, the difficult subjects, the climate of welcome in our communities”.

These themes break sharply with a traditional approach to religious life, not only in the terminology used but, more profoundly of course, in the very subject matter studied.

Even more explicit is the concluding speech to the General Assembly of the Union of Major Superiors of France in 1964, delivered by Bishop Garrone, who presented the new pastoral orientations in the field of religious life:

If religious want to be part of the movement of the Council, they must say to themselves that the grace which impels the Church calls for a kind of exaltation of the apostolic potentialities of which they are the depositaries, they must question themselves to know if these virtualities are really at work.

The bishop first greeted the new Pentecost that was raising the Church after the Council:

There is no doubt, he said, that there are dormant values, and this is no longer permitted. The problem facing the Church is so serious, the contact with the world is so obvious, the action of God is so intense that it is impossible to admit that something remains unused. God moves the Church. He moves the episcopate. He draws it from the four corners of the world. The Holy Spirit does not limit himself to mobilizing the bishops, he works the whole Church. No one has the right to settle for dead spots.

Why was the situation suddenly so serious?

Because, he explained, Pope John XXIII called us to order by asking us to admit that the Church today preaches in the desert and that dialogue with the world is barely begun.

27 - Ibid, p. 34

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Archbishop Garrone could not have been unaware that Pope Pius XII had already stressed the need for a reform of the Church, and in particular of religious institutes, in order to better respond to the expectations of an upturned 21st century. The Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus had attempted, some ten years earlier, to respond to this call by reforming its constitutions. Archbishop Garrone of Toulouse, where the motherhouse of the Congregation was located on rue Perchepinte, so close to his own residence, could not have been unaware of this reform. Perhaps he was thinking about it when he gave the rest of his speech? His conclusion is astonishing:

This common questioning has its translation at the level of religious. They have already seriously questioned themselves. They have thought about the costumes! In my opinion, this is secondary. There is an integration of the religious in today's reality that calls for deeper questioning.

Getting to the heart of the matter, the archbishop clarified his thoughts: Women no longer have the same place in the world today as they did yesterday, and consequently, if the nun were to keep the same place in the Church today as she did in the past, we would be out of touch with reality. How this sociological mutation will be translated into the religious state? I do not know, but I am sure that it must be.

The vow of obedience was, in his eyes, particularly affected by the need for reform:

In the same way that the religious is beginning to put her ballot paper in the ballot box, it is necessary that within the communities themselves, not certainly to alter its nature but to recover its value, obedience be the object of a renewal: to the promotion of the woman in the world must correspond a

promotion of the religious in the Church. This is a line that I believe cannot be ignored.

Certainly, the future cardinal did not forget that the nun is first of all destined for the glory of God. But in evoking it, he let

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knows how to understand that this end was itself subordinated to the joy and the inner balance:

We have spoken of their mission, of the sovereign right of God which is affirmed through them, of the sovereign freedom of their choices. Through religious existence, the affirmation is given that God can be sufficient to make one live and even to give one inner joy and balance.

Taking up the words of the Pope's introductory speech to the Council, the bishop called on religious to enter into dialogue with the world:

In this way, by reflecting on what is the soul of the Council, by thinking of this contact to be renewed with the world, of this dialogue where the word of God can be heard and find its response, the religious can rediscover her own mission.

Thus, the year 1966 was dedicated to the reception of the great conciliar orientations, as the program of the general assembly testifies:

- doctrine in religious life;
- revision of the constitutions ;

- the aggiornamento chapters;
- the renewal of the liturgy;
- the means of social communication.

All these topics were on the program of the conferences 25 .

How can we fail to hear a different echo when we compare these texts to those drawn up by the bishops and priests during the first national congress of priests in charge of religious in 1953? The astonishment grows when the signature of Bishop Garrone himself appears at the end of the inaugural lesson of that first congress. In just ten years, the tone, the concerns, the general orientations: everything had changed. The reading of a few texts that were barely prior to those that were

28 - USMF Archives, 1964, 7 th A. G., Conference of Mgr Gar

29 - CSM, op. cit., p. 37.

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pronounced during or after the Second Vatican Council is enough to convince us. We have chosen two of them: an excerpt from the national congress of priests in charge of religious held in 1953, and a speech by Pope Pius XII.

In 1953, therefore, the question of dialogue with the world - which would be considered a few years later, as we have just seen, as the soul of the Council - was evoked in this way: As for the world, the active Sisters are immersed in it, even though they have left it, and it comes to beat on the gates of the contemplatives.

The nun is at the same time separated from it by her religious profession and occupied by charitable concerns. To be of this world without being of the world is one of the paradoxes of Christianity. Religious should not be curious and eager to know everything, but it is good to follow the evolution of the world, its needs, its progress, its achievements, so as not to be overtaken in adaptation and right modernity, not to constitute in the Church an unapologetic anachronism. *Omnia probate, writes St. Paul, quod bonum est tenete.*

From the world, we will receive little and to good effect. But we will give him a lot 30 .

This statement was very consistent with the thinking of Pope Pius XII who, in his introductory letter to the first Congress of the States of Perfection, held in Rome from November 26 to December 8, 1950, had specified the purpose and spirit of the work to be accomplished. Three points were to hold the attention of the congressmen 31 :

- 1) an attempt to renovate religious families, an effect which was not to modify the juridical form of the institutes themselves but was to be in line with the present legislation;
- 2) the need for a choice of candidates and their solid and complete formation - in line with the demands of Popes Leo XIII, Pius X and Pius XI;

30 - Abbé Baechler, "Les Confesseurs ordinaires et extraordinaires", in *Directoire des prêtres chargés de religieuses*, Le Cerf, 1954, p. 183.

31 - Charles Lefebvre, "Orientations du Saint-Siège", in *Directoire des prêtres chargés de religieuses*, Le Cerf, 1954, p. 291.

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3) a more perfect adaptation to apostolic activity through a culture more appropriate to the missions to be carried out.

In his closing address, the Holy Father returned to the capital place occupied by religious in the hierarchical Church, to the value of obedience, and finally to the union of the interior life and the apostolate, assuring a perfect adaptation to the needs of the present times.³²

But the directives of the new Council committed the religious congregations to a very different path. Mother Marie-Rose tried to put them into practice.

Towards a second aggiornamento?

It is again thanks to the report of a General Chapter, that of 1967, that we can know something of the situation of the Congregation during this Generalate and the changes made to its way of life.

In her report on the people and the practice of the rule, Mother Marie-Rose gives a glimpse of some of these modifications: The life of prayer, she explains, remains in conformity with what the constitutions ask of us: office, prayer - however, in the small communities, an attempt has been made to recite certain parts of the office in French: reading of the matins lessons, compilations.

Mother immediately added that such changes were adopted on a trial basis, with the chapter alone having the vote to decide on a change in this matter. In the same spirit, the majority of the communities adopted the Mass in the vernacular, while leaving those who wished to do so the

possibility of attending a Mass celebrated according to the traditional rite of St. Pius V. The date of 1963 seems to be the correct one for the introduction of the Mass in the vernacular, or in

32 - RCR, vol. xxiv, 1952, p. 122 ff.

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the modified Mass in the Congregation. This would correspond to the inauguration of the changes by the Pope: in fact, on the first Sunday of Lent 1965, one may recall that Pope Paul VI had wanted to mark in a memorable way the coming into force of the first liturgical norms for the application of the Second Vatican Council, which had not yet been completed, by choosing to celebrate Mass according to the new rubrics, not in a patriarchal basilica in Rome but in a simple parish.³³ The description of this first Papal Mass gives an idea of what these new celebrations were like in convents and parishes throughout the Christian world. The description of this first Papal Mass gives an idea of what these new celebrations were like in the convents and parishes of the Christian world:

La Documentation Catholique is satisfied with a photograph of this papal mass on the cover of its No. 1445 (April 4, 1965) (...) This photograph (...) shows a wooden platform with three steps, on which is placed a large altar-table, also made of wood, covered with a single tablecloth. On this altar are symmetrically arranged a small crucifix and low candlesticks and, between the altar and the crowd, two lecterns. Around the platform, clerics but also lay people, men and women. (...) To truly understand the general layout of the place, one must consult the parish album, which is

possible during a trip to Rome. In these parish photographs, one can see that the main altar and its tabernacle had been hidden by a large drapery, which served as a backdrop for the new arrangement.

On this drapery, a monumental crucifix. The altar-table on its wooden platform had been installed in front of the stone communion bench, that is, outside the sanctuary. Since no mobile communion bench had been installed in front of this new altar, there was no longer any fence between it and the nave 34 .

It was not yet the new rite, but the first modifications of the Roman missal, whose initiators did not hide their intention to make them the precursors of a new

33 - Abbé Benoît Wailliez, "Liturgie : quelle est la bonne interprétation du concile ?" in Pour qu'il règne , n° 117, p. 7.

34 - Ibid, p. 7.

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rite. The great architect of this reform, Bishop Pierre Jounel, for example, presents the modifications of 1965 in this way: When in 1962 the Congregation of Rites published a new edition of the Roman Missal, in order to adapt it to the code of rubrics of 1960, the many corrections made to the rites of the Mass were welcomed, but no one had the impression of a novelty. The *Ritus servandus in celebratione Missæ* was updated, simplified on some points, and clarified here and there in its wording; it did not differ essentially from the one promulgated by Pope St. Pius V in 1570. As for the *Ordo Missæ*, it had not undergone any modification.

On the contrary, on March 7, 1965, priests and faithful discovered a new liturgy, celebrating Mass for the first time

in accordance with the Ritus servandus and YOrdo Missæ promulgated on January 27 of the same year under the joint authority of the Council for the Application of the Liturgical Constitution and the Congregation of Rites. No doubt the new use of the language of the country had a lot to do with this discovery, but the rites themselves were presented in a light unknown until then. (...) The Ritus Servandus of 1965 belongs, from a certain point of view, to the lineage of the Ritus of 1570.

He preserves the plan and frequently reproduces the terms. (...) But it is of another spirit. The Ritus of 1965 wished to restore without further delay the liturgy of the word: it is celebrated at the celebrant's seat and at the ambo (...); the universal prayer finally crowns the whole rite. The future Ordo Missæ will have nothing to add to such an order. (...) Heir to the liturgy of yesterday, establishing today essential elements of the liturgy of tomorrow, the Ritus Servandus of 1965 is a ritual of transition 35.

In most of the Congregation's establishments, the children's Mass at this time was marked by these first liturgical modifications. On the other hand, the community Masses depended on the choice of the local prioress who, in many cases, had decided to preserve the traditional form of

35 - Pierre Jounel, Les rites de la messe en 1965, quoted by Abbé Benoît Wailliez, in Pour qu'il règne , n° 117, editorial.

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the Tridentine Mass, without change. The partial but real acquiescence of the Congregation to the novelties introduced into the ritual of the Mass was in line with the general attitude of most Catholics of that time. To cite only

the emblematic case of Archbishop Lefebvre, it is interesting to note that the seminarians of Ecône, in 1969, deplored

The biographer of the prelate writes that it is not without reason that the psalm *Judica me* and the last gospel were not read at the Mass of Ecône, but also that the readings of the epistle and the gospel were done at the lectern in front of the people 36 .

Contemporaries had noted that the prelate was of course celebrating the Mass of St. Pius V, but according to the 1967 reform, that is, in its most simplified form, with the suppression of multiple signs of the cross and genuflections, with the elevation of the host and chalice without prior genuflection, the unique recitation of the Domine, non sum dignus, before communion, with the celebrant and the faithful together 37 .

It was not until 1974 that Archbishop Lefebvre decided to return strictly to the rubrics of John XXIII and to impose them as norms on all the houses of the Society of Saint Pius X.³⁸ The attitude of the Congregation was thus in line with that of the majority of Catholics. 38 The attitude of the Congregation was thus in line with that of the majority of Catholics.

In another area, important innovations had penetrated community life and modified the ascetic practices of the Sisters. For example, the 1967 Chapter regulated the use of television sets, which meant their introduction into the communities.

Certainly, he specifies, there is no question of denying that television can be a means of enrichment by widening our

36 - Bernard Tissier de Mallerais, Marcel Lefebvre, Clovis, 2002, p. 474.

37 - Bishop Jacques Masson, in Pourquoi et comment je suis allé à Écône, quoted by Father Benoît Wailliez, in Pour qu'il règne, n° 117, p. 6.

38 - Abbé Benoît Wailliez, " Monseigneur Lefebvre et la réforme liturgique ", in Pour qu'il règne, n° 117, p. 6.

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horizons. However, the Chapter recalls that television is like cinema, concerts, theater and other occasions of culture and relaxation: the Sisters can only use it in dependence and, each time, with the formal authorization of the Mother Prioress. The Chapter is very reticent about the use of television in school, which acts by a slow impregnation of the mind, which escapes the influence of the teacher and sometimes contradicts his teaching.

The same chapter gives precise instructions on the wearing of the religious habit:

Even if the religious habit is not essential to the life of consecration, nevertheless the habit fixed by the constitutions responds to the character of the institute. It can therefore be changed... But it cannot be suppressed because it is one of the elements which serve to distinguish religious life as a sign of holiness in the Church... Moreover, the laity who venerate and respect consecrated persons expect from them that modesty, that reserve, that edifying note of austerity and that mark of poverty, even external, which make their service more beautiful.

In commenting on article 12, the Chapter reminds us that the dress of the Sisters must always be dignified and poor. In

short, dignity and poverty of life appropriate to our state of poverty and to our mission as religious teachers.

Such clarifications assume that arrangements had been made, at least in a personal capacity, for the relief or removal of the habit.

Another important change had affected the apostolate of the Sisters: following the directives of the “national pastoral”, and forced by necessity, the Congregation had agreed to sign simple contracts with the State which assured the Sisters a salary and a pension, while leaving the Congregation a relative autonomy in the field of teaching. This agreement, which provided the religious congregations with considerable material assistance, nevertheless entailed a certain number of constraints, among which was the need to comply with some of the requirements of the National Education System.

1885: Mother Hélène Daguzan, Prioress General of the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus in Toulouse, founded by Father François Vincens (inset) at the beginning of the nineteenth century, decided to affiliate the Congregation with the Third Order of Saint Dominic. She made the request to the Superior General of the Order, Father Hyacinthe Cormier (p. 20).

mistress of novices, called to God in 1934 after fifty years of profession and twenty-five years of exercise of her office (p. 136).

The novitiate of the Congregation is located in Montréjeau (p. 42). It is renowned for the beauty of its complex and its chapel (seen below). It is also “haloed by the memory of holy nuns” (p. 24).

Holy Year 1950: pilgrimage of the Congregation and its students to Rome (above). There was a great rush to see Pius XII pass by (below), see p. 24.

1954: Mother Marie-Angélique Lescouzères is elected Prioress General. She continued the implementation of the constitutions reformed in 1953. "What do we have in our new constitutions? This is what we, responsible before God for the Congregation, have the duty to ask ourselves" (p. 135).

1961: In a symbolic way, Mother Marie-Angélique closed her superiorate with the blessing of the new novitiate (above). Bishop Théas came to bless this house of formation which is living out the revised Constitutions, in the continuity of the heritage (p. 136). The novitiate is located in the Annunciation house in Seilh (below).

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of the Vatican (1962-1965) 1^ Eg " SC "" day after the second council of the dioceses where is im l E "" ura 8 ee P ar pressure from the bishops français ~ ' CSt ™ P,antée the Congregation, it concludes its superioro, pure which, in its words, "should be a chapitn

of the dioceses in 1967, one of election and

' mm '° " (P-162).

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Among these requirements, the issue of gender diversity was raised.

The Congregation also had to accept the regulations of the school maps. It was a question of grouping by cycles proposed in all the dioceses. In order to gather sufficient numbers of children to offer each one the possibility of choosing the course of study that suited him or her, and to collect the state subsidies allocated only from a certain number of pupils, the bishops had enjoined the religious congregations to share the cycles in the cities: one congregation was to be in charge of primary education, another of the middle school, another of the high school, and yet another of the professional sections. This organization made the idea of a complete schooling in the same establishment and under the authority of one and the same Congregation impossible. Mother Marie-Rose nevertheless felt that she had to adopt it in order to conform to the national directives of the episcopate.

In the 1967 chapter, in her report on persons and the practice of the rule, Mother Marie-Rose drew up an assessment of her generalate and the reforms introduced. After having evoked the different aspects of religious life in the Congregation (novitiate, prayer life, retreats, common life, etc.), she concluded with an appreciation of the question of the apostolate of the Sisters: The unity of teaching has not been pursued as it had been during the previous ten years. This is surely due to my fault (lack of directives and above all of intellectual competence) and also that of the assistants who, too overburdened by the heavy burden of a teaching house in the midst of change, were unable to give me their help. You know the situation of the house in Toulouse and the decision taken at the level of the

diocese, a decision which we agreed to after having shown the difficulties of all kinds that this cut entailed for Saint-Thomas.

The mother general reluctantly agreed to these changes related to school map consolidation.

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In spite of all this, it is possible to say that the real rupture between traditional religious life and innovations in the wake of the Council was only effective in the few months that preceded the meeting of the General Chapter of 1967. In fact, according to the directives of the episcopate, Mother Marie-Rose Tassy planned to make this chapter of election a chapter of *aggiornmetito*, as she herself explained at the beginning of the report on the persons:

At the beginning of this chapter, which should be both a chapter of election and a chapter of *aggiornamento* - at least in the main lines - I want to thank, through you, all the Sisters who responded widely and simply to the consultation and the work proposed in October 1966. Community work on the Constitutions - letters expressing freely the thoughts of each one on this subject (135 responses) - questionnaire (140 responses).

At that time, the Congregation had one hundred and seventy-nine members ³. It should be remembered that in his *motu proprio* of 1966, Pope Paul VI had wanted the work of renewal requested by Vatican 11 to begin without delay in all the institutes. He had asked for the preparation of a so-called “special” chapter to be held, according to him, “within two or at most three years”. Moreover, the *motu proprio* *Ecclesiae Sancta* had recommended that “a free consultation

of the religious” be foreseen, at the end of which the superiors should draw up a synthesis of the opinions of each one “so that the work of the chapter may be facilitated and oriented”. He suggested “the consultation of local and provincial chapters, the appointment of commissions, the sending of questionnaires 40 ... “

This is how it was done in the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus: Mother Marie-Rose conformed scrupulously to the directives of the Congregation.

39 - Archives of the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus of Fanieaux: chapiti

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of the decree. A questionnaire was sent to all the Sisters who had to fill it out before March 30, 1967. This questionnaire was drawn up according to the wishes that the Sisters had previously sent to her and that she had submitted to her Council. Before the 1967 Chapter meeting, the Mother General wanted each Sister to give her opinion on the modifications or deletions of the articles of the Constitutions that some had requested. This was the purpose of the questionnaire.

It was presented as a long list of articles with a precision written in front of them: “to be modified? (wording)” or “to be deleted?”, sometimes accompanied by a comment that made the point explicit: “to be modified? (wording)” or “Delete ‘at least once a month’?” The Sisters were asked to answer yes or no, giving their reasons succinctly. In all, forty-two articles were submitted for consultation with the Sisters, and eight others were to be modified ex officio by virtue of the decree *Perfecta Caritatis*, the *motu proprio* *Ecclesia Sancte* and the decree on lay institutes. The earlier

consultation with the Sisters had resulted in a surprisingly large file: for example, the Sisters were asked whether they wanted to change Article 4.

The Congregation, this article says, belongs to the Third Order of Saint Dominic. This means that the structures of its religious life, the organization of the houses, the asceticism and the forms of apostolate are proper to it, and therefore different from those of the Order; but the spirit of the Order must be that of the Congregation, that is to say, a love of souls so great that it requires an ever-growing contemplation and a keen sense of the importance and integrity of doctrine; for it is urgent to bring the mercy of the truth to souls

It seemed difficult to conceive of any modification of this article without touching the very nature of the Congregation, what we could call, in the words of the Council, its “proper charism. In fact, the archives have preserved the ironic responses of some Sisters that the ingenuity of the

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questionnaire seems to have pushed us to the brink of anger. Faced with this article 4 and the question “to be modified? “, the Sister answered:

The Congregation does not belong to the Third Order. The love of souls does not require contemplation. Similarly, when the questionnaire asks the Sisters about article 17 and whether the words “by exception” and “in small numbers” should be deleted from the following formulation:

As an exception, we can admit Sisters who will not take care of children because they do not have the aptitudes (but they will be few in number) and it is on the express condition that

they have the intelligence and love of the work and are capable of contributing to it in the position that will be assigned to them.

the Sister replied:

Sisters who are unable to care for children will be admitted regularly and in large numbers, because the purpose of the Congregation is anything but 41 .

It is difficult to find a common thread in the questionnaire. The wishes of the Sisters seem to have been taken into account, whatever they were. Thus, the requests concern the reduction of the time of novitiate and postulancy, the suppression of the mention of weekly confessions, of extraordinary confessors, of the silence usually respected by the Sisters, of the solitude in the cells, of the habit for each Sister to take care of her own household, the exhortation to have in her cell an image of Christ and of the Virgin chosen in such a way that it truly deserves the title of sacred image, the monthly regularity of the chapter of coupes, the measures of canonical prudence concerning the opening of the parlors on

41 - Archives of the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus of Fanjeaux, answer of

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outside... The desiderata also suggest the modification of the articles concerning the agony and death of the Sisters: amendment of article 196 which gives the possibility to the sick Sisters to receive communion every day even if they have taken some liquid or solid remedy, of article 200 which evokes the Salve Regina sung at the moment of death

Another request proposes the modification of article 229, which until now has been written as follows

The goal of the Sisters is not to form women who shine or succeed in the world, but to form Christian women who are capable, in spite of contradictions, of being a leaven of the Gospel in their environment.

There was also a demand for a change in the method of electing the Mother General, her assistants, the secretary and the bursar, as well as in the way the General Chapters were organized. As we can see, the questionnaire as a whole tends toward a reduction of ascetic practices, a simplification of religious life, and a more democratic organization of the government of the Congregation. Only one question proposes the reinforcement of an existing disciplinary practice. It is article 154 which reads as follows

Every Friday and on days of Church fasting, the Sisters will drink water at all meals to remind them of the spirit of penance. The Good Friday snack will be bread and

Faced with this article and the suggestion “to be strengthened...”, which calls for the accentuation of an already strict fast, with bread and water, and which contrasts with the proposal for a general lightening of all the ascetic practices connected with religious life, a Sister replied ironically:

Sisters may smoke and go to the ball, but they must wear a cilice, an iron chain on each arm and follow a strict vegetarian diet.

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In truth, nothing of what happened in the Congregation at that time is surprising: all religious congregations experienced these phenomena in the aftermath of the Council. The Jesuit Father Dortel-Claudot, in charge of the aggiornamento of the Congregations as we have said, drew a balance sheet of this period which seems to have been written to depict the Holy Name of Jesus.

Everyone agrees that the religious congregations of apostolic life were the part of the People of God that welcomed the Council's orientations most favorably. Vatican II had asked them to make an effort to open up to the world and to change their way of life, along with the revision of their constitutions. The vast majority of the Congregations joyfully embraced these perspectives. Certainly, there were some clumsinesses and a touch of madness here and there 42 .

Earlier, he had mentioned the points of the constitutions that were most often questioned:

The entire areas of religious life for which my advice and help were sought concerned primarily the following chapters of the constitutions in progress:

- government;
- training;
- poverty, obedience, community life ;
- administration of property.

I was questioned less about the life of prayer and chastity; rather little about the apostolate. Concerning the important chapter of the constitutions on the spirit and purpose of the institute, what in time was to be called "the charism of the

institute,” I was asked few questions during the phase of the special chapters.

Another testimony of the time is worth quoting, because it corroborates the conclusions that can be drawn about the extravagance of that period of *aggiornamento*. It is the reflections of Brother

42 - Michel Dortel-Claudoc, op. cit.

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Michel Sauvage, member of the Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. In a most confused style, he presents the general spirit that presided over the work:

Renovation, he writes, is not the passage from one way of being to another, but the invention of new ways of being, starting from an effective and constant rediscovery of the reason for being. The opportunity of the moment we are living, the opportunity of the future of religious institutes, is that they are called to leave a mentality that privileged forms, that is to say, ways of being, to a creativity that starts again and again, with the creative freedom of the Gospel, from the reason for being that gave birth to the institute.⁴⁴

The contagious hope that lifted up all those involved in the *aggiornamento* was based on the firm conviction that a renaissance would soon follow the apparent decline in vocations that seemed to be linked to that period:

Of course, as Michel Rondet wrote in 1971, this rebirth, like any Christian rebirth, requires the death of what is sclerosis, sterile attachment to the transitory forms of the past, fear or incomprehension in the face of the newness of the situation in which we find ourselves, with all that it implies in terms of calls to evangelical conversion.

And Father Dortel-Claudot recalls what his enthusiasm was:

For my part, I have a wonderful memory of that time when we were busy rediscovering the essence of our apostolic religious vocation, each one according to the proper spirit of his or her institute, freeing it from small, outdated and insignificant practices. As a close witness of all this, I was in close communion with all these searches and dreams (sic!). I was intimately convinced that we were on the right track, and fully obedient to the Church and without any ulterior motive, I contributed to this collective effort. Of course, I was aware that

<4 - Quoted by Michel Dortel-Claudot, *ibid*, p. 19. 45 - *Ibid*, p. 20.

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It was not that many institutes did not have as many vocations as in the past, but I was convinced that this was going to change thanks to the *aggiornamento* that was taking place⁶.

However, a survey conducted in 1973 among religious congregations by Father Luchini was to quickly temper enthusiasm. As early as 1969, at the request of the major superiors of France, this Dominican father had undertaken a sociological study of the female religious apostolic life in France. A second survey was asked of him four years later. The results clearly showed the continuous decline of vocations in the French female apostolic religious life from 1969 to 1973. The surprise seems to have been unprecedented! Father Dortel-Claudot recalls the leap of faith he had to make. The account of the doubts that inhabited him at that time is revealing:

At times," he wrote, "I am tempted to think, as some do, that religious of apostolic life are in fact becoming members of secular institutes living in community. But this bothers me because I have the impression that we are no longer in line with the religious life of all time and that the history of this life is coming to a halt before our eyes. The absence of recruitment of most of the congregations of apostolic life, the maintenance of sufficient recruitment in the monasteries and the few institutes, such as the "Little Sisters of the Poor", which have kept away from professional commitments, can give the impression that in France, in fact the history of apostolic religious life is coming to an end at the end of the 20th century, and that the present generation, the one which, since 1968, has pushed in the direction of secularization and professionalization, far from being a prophetic generation, as it imagines itself to be, is simply an "end of the race", as sympathetic as it is turbulent... Here is what sometimes occupies my thoughts 47!

46 - Michel Dortel-Claudot, *ibid*, p. 17.

47 - *Ibid*, p. 39.

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His personal testimony is even more precise and eloquent a little later. In 1979, he wonders:

Have we not been on the wrong track for years? In spite of my profession of faith in 1974," he wrote, "in spite of the fact that I was giving myself fully to helping the Congregations prepare their definitive constitutions, I was questioning the new modes of apostolic presence of the Congregations since the Council. (...) I summarize what I

said at the time: in France today, is the continent of “religious apostolic life” drifting? In France, is not apostolic religious life today losing its traditional identity? And to remedy this, has it not gone in search of a borrowed identity, either on the side of the purely contemplative life, or on the side of the laity, depending on whether the capricious winds were pushing it in one direction or the other?

The Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus was thus, as we have seen, enveloped in this great movement of *aggiornamento* which affected all religious congregations of women in France between 1965 and 1970.

However, the date of 1967 was to set it aside a little. On July 8, 1967, the General Chapter of which we have already spoken opened. The election of the new Mother General suddenly changed the evolution of the Congregation.

Under the presidency of Archbishop Guyot of Toulouse, and in the presence of Reverend Father Marie-Joseph Nicolas, ecclesiastical assistant to the Congregation, the votes of the capitulars surprisingly designated Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin. Since Mother Anne-Marie was not of age as required by Canon 504, a postulation was sent to his Eminence the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation of Religious. While awaiting a response, Bishop Jean Guyot granted full powers to Mother Anne-Marie to preside over and continue the work of the Chapter. The elections

1 - Ibid, p. 30.

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of the afternoon of the same day named Mother Jeanne-Thérèse Messal, Mother Magdeleine-de-Jésus Juès, Mother

Saint-François Assémat and Mother Marie-Luc Sidos as general assistants.

On July 9, the Chapter was to begin its work. But, given the importance of the work to be accomplished and her need for personal information on the various problems of the Congregation, Mother Anne-Marie proposed the following resolution to the capitulants for their vote:

Do you agree to postpone until Easter the conclusion of the chapter of aggiornamento with work by commissions that will meet in the meantime to reflect on the questions

The Chapter unanimously accepted this proposal. On July 14, at 7:00 p.m., a favorable response to the postulation arrived from Rome. Bishop Saint-Gaudens, in the absence of Bishop Guyot, announced the confirmation of the election of Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin to the community. After the obedience, the Sisters went to the chapel for the Te Deum of thanksgiving. The chapter then broke up, the next meeting of the commissions being set for Bordeaux during the Christmas vacations.

The Generalate of Mother Anne-Marie

The new mother general

Who was the new Superior General? Was her election a surprise? Too little time separates us from the death of this Mother for a true historical work to be done on her. Nevertheless, it is possible to find in her own testimony a few biographical elements that allow us to follow her path until her nomination as head of the Congregation.

Mother Anne-Marie's first contact with the Congregation was in the second grade, which she attended at the Holy Name of Jesus School in Aix-en-Provence, after having attended

the fourth grade at the high school and then the third grade at the Durieux School, directed by the future Sister Marie-Charles. When the call of her vocation was heard, it was first to the Little Sisters of Charles de Foucauld, in Tubé, that Mother felt called. Health reasons hindered this project. Her poor health forced her to repeat first the fourth year, then the first. The arrival of Mother Hélène Jamet in Aix opened new horizons for Mother. Not yet a general mother, Mother Hélène Jamet spoke one day to the students in the playground about the burning issue of freedom.

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I was dazzled..." Mother Anne-Marie would tell us later. Later, when I was thinking of returning, the Sisters were in the midst of a General Chapter. I said then that I would return only if Mother Hélène or Mother Bruzaud were elected
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This was the case. From those years of schooling in Aix, Mother Anne-Marie kept the memory of her admiration for Mother Marie-Joseph and remembered having discovered there the Dominican spirit, "in spite of the shortcomings of the Sisters. Above all," she added, "I did not find the Sisters compassionate..."

After studying at the Aix (acuité) University, then at the Sorbonne until she obtained a degree in literature, Mother Anne-Marie decided to enter the Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus. She went to Montréjeau on March 6, 1949. She recounted this moment:

I arrived at the novitiate the year that Father Calme! had just put into practice a certain number of practical reforms in the direction of a greater authenticity of religious life... This was not without difficulty! That year, he had just

removed the silver crucifixes that all the Sisters wore on their chests.

- It is not normal for nuns to carry money! he said.

All the crucifixes were melted into a large chalice.

Mother would later recall the atmosphere, marked at the same time by the impetus given to the Congregation by Mother Hélène and the Father who passed through the communities to read and comment on the new Constitutions as they were being written and modified; at the same time, in a diffuse way that is difficult to define, there was a certain palpable opposition, even if in reality only thirteen Sisters were really in opposition.

The canonical visit preceding the taking of the habit was made by Cardinal Saliège. An anecdote recalls that he said

lin, recorded on July 16 and 17, 2007, and August 8 and 9, 2007.

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with great difficulty. The Sisters (and especially Mother Marie-Réginald Chabert who was his secretary) had recommended to Mother Anne-Marie, who was worried about not understanding him, to answer once yes, once no. Hence the dialogue:

- Would you be pleased if I came to your ordination?

- No, Eminence!

- Would you mind if I came to your taking of the habit?

- Yes, Eminence!

The archives of the Congregation therefore preserve the curious beginning of the cardinal's sermon at the taking of the habit:

She didn't want me to come! I came anyway!

On September 8, 1949, Mother Anne-Marie took the habit before being sent for her canonical year in Toulouse. She was the first to arrive in the habit in this house, for the laws of Marshal Pétain abolishing the measures of exclusion taken in 1905 with regard to religious congregations had only been passed in 1941, and the authorities of the Holy Name of Jesus had conceded a delay - even a dispensation - to the older Sisters to resume the habit.

It was an opportunity for her to discover closely the work of Father Calmel and Mother Hélène Jamet in the Congregation.

Very quickly, Mother Anne-Marie became attached to the personality of Mother Hélène whom she admired. A friendship was formed that years of correspondence would never deny. In one of her last letters, shortly before her death, Mother Hélène even promised Mother Anne-Marie to come and get her on the day of her death. Numerous expressions reveal this deep friendship which was not only an attraction of persons but also a close communion of thought and ideals. Behind a tone that is sometimes playful :

It's been a long time since I last wrote to you. I want to do so today, if only to wish you a happy new year.

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I want to assure you that I am praying for you with all my heart: I want you to be holy, sanctified by your office.⁵⁰

...a great union of hearts is manifested:

Mother, my last hour of class is over and I want to use this first free time to tell you about my union during this Holy Week and the Easter holidays. I was happy about our too brief meeting at the funeral... It is the lot of this fleeting and moving life to only notice each other. The essential thing is to remain together in the depths of our being, through the service of the Lord who has joined us in this Congregation. This word only means that I am with you, Mother ⁵¹ .

In 1976, Mother Hélène was writing:

With all my heart I embrace you. You have known for a long time what my concern is for your soul, which I love like my own for the love of God, so that both may rejoice in God during eternity ⁵² .

Each of these letters is invariably signed in the same way: "Your sister Hélène Jamet".

It is important to dwell for a moment on the deep ties that united Mother Helene and Mother Anne-Marie. Indeed, the election of Mother Anne-Marie in 1967, when she was only 39 years old, and when, as prioress in Grasse, she did not seem to have been approached for the office, was a surprise. The new Mother General had shown no enthusiasm for the reforms undertaken by Mother Marie-Rose Tassy. Indeed, it was her comment to the 1966 questionnaire that was the most incisive and ironic. The first act of her Generalate was to tear up the responses sent by the Sisters to the same questionnaire.

50 - Archives of the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus of Fanjeaux, letter from Mother Hélène Jamet to Mother Anne-Marie, née Andrée Simoulin, November 28, 1970.

51 - Ibid, April 3, 1971.

52 - Ibid, September 3, 1976.

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tionary. All that remains today is the synthesis drawn up by Mother Marie-Rose from the Sisters' responses. We can therefore affirm that there is no continuity between the work of Mother Marie-Rose and that of Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin. Why then was she elected? Without proposing an answer of a certain character, we can perhaps evoke the friendship which bound the new Mother General to Mother Hélène Jamet, and especially, their communion of thought on the subject of the religious ideal. Other testimonies also evoke her openness to all - even if, inevitably, Mother did not always have unanimous support - and her measured positions with regard to Father Calmel whom she appreciated and defended for the strength of his intellectual and spiritual work, while conceding to those who had been hurt by it that he was not always skilful or discreet enough. Her friendship with Mother Hélène on the other hand, and her admiration for her, knew no shadow.

Now we remember that in 1954, tensions in the Congregation had become so great, in spite of the extraordinary growth given by the reform, that Mother Hélène thought she was one of the causes of the split: she had announced her refusal to be elected Superior General again 53 . 53 But the Congregation, almost unanimously, would have liked to offer her its votes.

The Chapter took place: Rome announced the nomination of Mother Marie-Rose Tassy, for whom no Sister seemed to have voted. However conciliatory Mother Marie-Rose may have been, she remained in the shadow of this uncanonical election throughout her Generalate. Moreover, her links with Father Nicolas, with whom the Congregation associated the sanction against Father Calmel, did not contribute to her prestige. Finally, the new Constitutions were appreciated: the Sisters had discovered them, practiced them, and had a good understanding of them.

53 - Cf. p. 131.

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loved. For many, they were inseparably linked to the personality of Mother Hélène.

The election of a Sister whose closeness to Mother Helene was well known and whose ideas were faithful to the Constitutions of 1954 can certainly be explained in part by these considerations. For many Sisters, this election was interpreted as a “miracle” of Providence which unexpectedly changed the course of events. Thus, in September 1967, Mother Hélène wrote

Thank you, Mother, for your last letter and for your friendship. You know mine and my joy at knowing you are there. I will never cease to see in it an almost miraculous protection of God over our poor little torn and shaky Congregation.

The first measures

As early as July 1967, Mother Anne-Marie organized her government as a fight against what she would later call “the drifts of the conciliar Church”. During her priorate in Grasse, she had been surprised by the evolution of ideas that she had observed within the religious organizations. For example, there were regular meetings of all the Dominican prioresses near Nîmes. The last meeting in which the Holy Name of Jesus participated was chaired by a certain Mother Jeanne d’Arc. The theme was “Welcoming and Listening”. Each prioress was asked to come in turn to simulate a meeting between a prioress and a Sister “in difficulty”. All declined the offer and Mother Jeanne d’Arc exclaimed: “They are not mature!” Present at the meeting, Mother Anne-Marie expressed her indignation

54 - Lctt

r Hélène Jamet to mère

-Marie, September 15, 1967.

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before these mock situations which seemed to him odious and dramatic for the life of religious congregations.

Statements such as that of Father Teilhard de Chardin had just been condemned:

If, as a result of some interior reversal, I were to lose successively my faith in Christ, my faith in a personal God, my faith in the Spirit, it seems to me that I would continue to believe in the World. The World (the value, the infallibility of the goodness of the World) is, in the final analysis, the first and only thing I believe in. It is by this faith that I live, and it is to this faith, I feel, that, at the moment of death, beyond all doubts, I will abandon myself... To the confused faith in a

One and Infallible World, I surrender myself, wherever it leads me 55 .

But even though they were condemned, such declarations were slyly echoed even in ecclesiastical circles. They aroused in Mother Anne-Marie a distress and an anger which is echoed in her correspondence. On September 3, 1967, Father Calmel tried to answer them:

Show the Sisters that you are with the Church of all time (in accordance with the dogmatic documents of the reigning pope). Even if it is so easy for those Sisters who are weak and do not pray enough or want to please the world to retort to you that the practice of the bishops (of many) is a more or less disguised questioning of all dogmas and moral laws - private, family and political morals - and that the Pope does not take measures, and that, therefore, it is your way of doing things that will not be Church!... Stand firm. Support those Sisters and houses who prefer martyrdom to betrayal. We cannot delude ourselves: we are considered foolish, enemies and opponents of Vatican II, we who refuse the modernist interpretation that is given every day. And we have so few means to make ourselves heard! Do not be troubled, do not

55 - Documentation Catholique, 15 July 1962, text quoted by the Osservatorr Romarn in his commentary on the monitum of the Holy Office of 30 June 1962.

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no bitterness. We are with Jesus and his Church! Happy feast of Saint Pius X 56!

We remember that, as soon as she was elected, Mother tore up the answers to Mother Marie-Rose's questionnaire. She

explained the reason for this in a letter dated September 12, 1967:

No doubt, you are waiting with more or less confidence or anxiety to know what will become of our constitutions and what use will be made of your answers to the questionnaire sent by Mother Marie-Rose on the constitutions. Will this consultation be taken into consideration? What are our deepest intentions? Your concern is normal and it is only fair that I communicate our intentions to you and share our concerns with you, asking you to carry them in your prayer and in your apostolic zeal.

As Father Nicolas wrote to me on September 3, we are

We are obliged to make a chapter of aggiornamento, that is to say, to review our constitutions in order to adapt them to the spiritual and apostolic demands that the Council has identified and brought to light. This is an opportunity for us to make some improvements... An attentive study of your text and that of the Council, the examination of the vows not of a particular religious but of a majority, the lesson of life experience, the concern to make your text more complete, more effective, more practical, more faithful to its spirit and its goals, can indeed inspire us to make useful changes. But since your Constitutions were entirely redrafted in 1953, and in a spirit that was already truly that of renewal, and in the sense requested by the Council, it cannot be a question of a new redrafting, nor of going backwards, nor of calling into question the principles that inspired these Constitutions.

This is our thought: we do not intend to write new constitutions but to seek together the changes that seem necessary and especially how to be more

56 - Archives of the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus of Fanjeaux, letter from Father Calmel to Mother Anne-Marie, September 3, 1967.

Mother Anne-Marie's legacy

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faithful to their spirit. As you can easily see, this is not an easy task, so we thought it wise to follow article one of the bulletin sent to the major superiors entitled "Revision of the Constitutions" which every Mother Prioress and Chapter Delegate has in her hands and which says

It is difficult for the General Council, which is charged by the *motu proprio* with the preparation of the General Chapter and responsible for the revision of the Constitutions, to devote itself entirely to this task in addition to its functions of government. It is normal and wise that it should be assisted by setting up spiritually and technically qualified working bodies. He will therefore normally - but not necessarily - set up a special commission to assist the general council in the revision of the constitutions. This commission, composed of six, eight, ten religious named by the General Council, should reflect as much as possible the various aspects of the Congregation.

Mother announced the appointment of three Sisters who would be entrusted with the task of re-examining the constitutions according to the wishes of the Pope. This meeting was organized on the advice of Father Nicolas. It included Mother Hélène, Sister Bernard-Marie, and Mother Marie-Irène. The presence of Mother Hélène Jamet on the committee left no doubt about the orientations of the new Mother General.

Even more significantly, the new Mother General took advantage of the few weeks that separated her from the work of the Chapter to write to Rome and ask for an end to the sanctions that were still imposed on Father Calmel. She wanted Father Calmel to be able to resume an active ministry to the Sisters with the permission of the hierarchy. In August 1969, she obtained a favourable decision from the Congregation of Religious, thus putting an end to a painful situation for Father Calmel and the Sisters, and giving each of them the possibility of resuming spiritual contact with Father Calmel in obedience. Father Marie-Joseph Nicolas was asked to bring the news to the Congregation. The words he used underline the difficulty

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of a situation of which the majority of the Sisters disapproved and which had given rise to divergent attitudes and personal decisions. If several Sisters had accepted, albeit with a heavy heart, the removal of the Father, others, denying the legal value of the Roman decision because of the injustice committed, had felt that they could continue to interact with the Dominican without taking into account the sanction. Even within the group of Sisters who were truly grateful to the Father, opinions diverged. Mother Anne-Marie, for her part, had taken a position of submission, at least habitually,⁵⁷ to the orders of the Roman hierarchy, even though she had always affirmed the injustice of the sanction. But as soon as she had the opportunity, she sought to have the sanctions lifted. The text of Father Nicholas explicitly attributes to her the first role in obtaining it:

My dear Sisters," he wrote, "I have been asked by the Sacred Congregation of Religious to send you the enclosed letter which, although addressed to me, is intended for you. The

following is a letter dated July 9 from Cardinal Ildebrando Antoniutti, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Religious]. As you can see, in Father Calmel's favor, it is a question of a return to common law, that is, to freedom, in all that concerns correspondence and individual visits.

You will not be surprised that I am extremely happy with this measure, since I had asked for it myself and without anyone asking me. However, it was Mother General who finally obtained it.

57 - The letters di

sion dated 27; from Grasse that the meeting of the pr
dedicated... We do not maintain it

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faith does not mess with the truth Xm Sisters ' the ™ of
virginity ir to be holy... " e P*r God, though it is not enough

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■ Anne-Marie

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What has been a trial for many and for the Father is now over. As he wrote to me, "it must turn to more love". And I have no doubt that all of you have the same confidence in each other that this letter from Rome expresses. Everyone will continue to accept loyally and faithfully, as we are still being asked to do, the conclusions of the apostolic visitation after which I was appointed your ecclesiastical assistant 58 ... Moreover, as soon as Mother had taken the necessary steps in Rome, she resumed a more regular correspondence

with the Father, without waiting for the final decision, which she did not seem to doubt for a moment. On November 8, 1967, a letter from the Father gave the new Superior precise instructions for her government:

As a model of government, take St. Pius X:

- to strengthen in faith and piety the Christians of good will;
- maintain the faith of always;
- to beat the traitors.

First questions to ask all those who can understand: where are you in prayer? in trusting God? in the meaning of sin in you and in the world today? in the meaning of the action of the devil? in recollection and renunciation? in the love of souls?

Many Sisters are living in 1950... Put them back in front of their vocation... as well as in front of the real danger (which is much greater than that of 1950, the danger then was that of sclerosis, of "interestism" and "universitarianism" and of worldly fanfares) which is now apostasy in disguise. That alone...

The letters exchanged during the year 1969 recall the steps taken in Rome for the lifting of the sanctions. But its obtaining does not cause any special demonstration

58 - Archives of the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus of Fanjeaux, their. Nicolas, August 15, 1969.

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of enthusiasm. In Father Calmel's letters, one can read only one explicit allusion. On July 18, 1969, he wrote: The noose will have been loosened on the feast of the holy martyrs of the Eucharist. I think that the Lord is warning us to redouble our faith and love for this adorable sacrament... I would like to be given instructions on the mysteries of the faith... on the immutable dogmas defined, so that I can write the book that (it seems to me) I should write if God wills.

The positions of Mother General had been clear from the first days of her government. Consequently, the work of the Chapter focused on all the innovations that Mother Marie-Rose's reform had introduced. The themes dealt with were the following in the area of the Sisters' apostolate, teaching and education, school mapping, transition classes, parochial schools, co-education, television, spiritual formation and Catholic Action, lay auxiliaries in the area of prayer and community life, chastity and the religious habit, poverty and the question of old age insurance, obedience, the Mass, the Office, the Chapter of coupes, community meetings, spiritual rest stops, the postulancy, the familières, the archives.

The tone of all the texts of the chapter is clearly traditional, even though the documents of the Second Vatican Council are cited, but they are little used and always in the sense that is most in keeping with the religious tradition of the Congregations. An appendix is attached to the work. It concerns ecumenism, presented as one of the important questions in the Church today. Based on the decree of the Council, of which they adopted paragraph 4, the capitulants defined the position of the Congregation in this delicate matter:

It seemed to us that the beginning of the decree on ecumenism in the paragraph sums up our basic attitude

towards this question. "There is no true ecumenism without interior conversion. Indeed, it is renewal of the soul,

Mother Generalate.

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From self-denial and a free outpouring of charity, the desires for unity begin and mature. "

- This conversion of heart should be manifested first of all in our fraternal life by a mutual understanding and a positive regard for one another. Then, when the opportunity is given to us, by an effort "to eliminate words, judgments and facts that do not correspond either in justice or in truth to the situation of the separated brothers", and therefore in a benevolence towards the students of these confessions and their families that we could possibly have in our houses, without the slightest resignation before the truth and in humility.

. This concern for truth demands of all teachers, religious and lay, a serious study and a fair presentation of the historical circumstances which led to the separation or of the facts which follow from it. But historical information is only conceivable if it is enlightened by a solid doctrinal study of the truth held by the Catholic Church and a knowledge of her decisions in this area.

- It does not seem to me that we should shy away from the participation of any of us in ecumenical research meetings, but taking into account the Council's exhortation to the faithful "to abstain from all levity, from all imprudent zeal which could harm ecumenical progress".

In conclusion, the chapter strongly invites the Sisters to feel in their hearts the suffering of dissension, to carry daily in

their prayers this wish of the Lord: "That all may be One as You, Father, are in Me and I in You; that they may be one in us, so that the world may believe that You have sent Me."

The decisions of the chapter put an end to the experiments made in this or that community: while leaving a certain freedom due to circumstances, they asked that nothing be changed in the office while waiting for the reforms of the breviary, and conceded the reading in French only for the lessons at matins; while "rejoicing in the possibilities offered by late Masses", they recalled the importance of the Mass of

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community. They announced the maintenance of the chapter of couples, demanded the wearing of the religious habit without major changes, insisted on the need for true prudence with regard to television, reading and the cinema, linking these reminders to the vow of chastity that Cardinal Antoniutti had defined: To the fullness of love of Christ who calls, must respond the fullness of consecration... Chastity is the result of a progressive conquest that is obtained through an intense spiritual life, a humble and courageous gift, a radiant charity. We must therefore avoid everything that leads away from the true path, produces painful weaknesses, and exposes us to external perils, remembering that our human frailty needs protection and assistance and that, in faith alone, it is strengthened against dangers and courageously resists in the freedom of the children of God

Finally, admitting the de facto situation that had integrated the Congregation into the planning of the school map and deploring the consequences, the chapter announced the Congregation's will

to safeguard the greatest number of complete houses, specialized in sections A and D. The Congregation, he added, refuses to take responsibility for the second cycles alone, both because of a lack of subjects and in order to preserve, wherever possible, a unity of formation in the primary and first cycles.

The fight against the school map was the first fight that Mother Anne-Marie decided to wage during her generalate. It preceded that of the catechism and that of the Mass.

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59 - Speech by Cardinal Aijerucs, Rome, January 1967.

Mother Anne-Marie's Generalate

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The main axes

of the generalate of Mother Anne-Marie the school map

The Congregation had expressed its reluctance to enter into the divisions of the school map which cut off schools from part of their classes in favor of grouping students together, but in disregard of the necessary continuity in a schooling which envisages the formation of children over several years. A first interview of Mother Anne-Marie with Bishop Guyot on this subject led to the prelate's exclamation:

But finally, my Mother, this mixture of horns would be so beautiful!

At St. Thomas, the school map had already been put in place: classes stopped in the third grade. In reality, the Congregation had only accepted this solution because the

Annunciation House offered a possibility for the older students who wished to continue their studies at Holy Name of Jesus. According to the pastoral directives, these students should have joined the Sisters of Notre-Dame-des-Champs or the Congregation of Nevers.

The Archbishop of Toulouse did not understand the Superior's decision! Cardinal Saliège, who was so close to the Congregation that he came to all the feasts of the Holy Name of Jesus and often gave conferences there, Archbishop Garrone, Archbishop Guyot... Legally, the Congregation was directly dependent on Rome since its affiliation. Exemption is rare in religious congregations of women, and diocesan congregations dependent on bishoprics are much more numerous. This was not the case with Holy Name of Jesus, even though the bishops had a say in the sacristies and could arrange for canonical visits. However, the years of great friendship of the archbishop of Toulouse with the Holy Name of Jesus had created links

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that strict law allowed to be exceeded, but that habit had made very narrow. This situation explains the virulence deployed by the bishops to obtain from the Holy Name of Jesus an absolute submission to the decisions of the "national pastoral" which was then called "overall pastoral".

The school map was imposed everywhere by the bishops of France. In Tarbes, the tension between the bishopric and the Congregation was great between 1967 and 1968. In Toulon, events brought the Congregation into conflict with Father de Sentenac, director of diocesan free education. Mother Anne-Marie had to explain the reasons for the Holy Name of Jesus, based on the need for continuity in teaching: continuity which creates the unity of teaching from the first classes to

the last. She also recalled that the diversity of the schools also allowed parents to choose the best path for each child. She won the case in all the schools of the Congregation.

The catechism

The second battle of the Mother General was that of the catechisms.

It is not possible here to make a synthesis of what could be called the catechism quarrel in France between 1947 and 1975. Several works have dealt with the question. It is sufficient to refer to them. But it is necessary nevertheless to recall in broad strokes the stages which marked the evolution of religious teaching, from the publication, in 1937, of the Catechism for the use of the dioceses of France, until the imposition of the compulsory Common Fund adopted by the plenary assembly of the French episcopate, in 1966.

As early as 1957, diocesan commissions had undertaken the reform of the catechism for the use of the dioceses of France, which was used by almost all Catholic children in France. The re

The main criticism of this catechism was the dogmatic and severe aspect of its presentation, the lack of pedagogical concern, the absence of possible discussion linked to a too rigid formulation. An article by Father Congar, entitled "Catechesis and Questions", summarizes the divergent positions of those who still held to the 1937 catechism and those who wished to see its suppression. The article was published following the publication of the Dutch Catechism and the establishment of the compulsory Common Fund by the 1966 Plenary Assembly of the Bishops of France.

It happens,” wrote the Dominican Father, “that theologians are made responsible for the anxiety felt by many. Alas,” he wrote, “worried souls have multiplied since theologians have taken the habit of exposing their difficulties in the public square... Thus, three problems are posed on which we can obviously only express a brief opinion here:

- We have always personally tried to work without disturbance (...). But the thing is not so simple: one can disturb a well-founded faith, but one can also enlighten an ignorance, with the risk of disturbing it. (This is the example of Luther, towards whom the average opinion of Catholics is unjust.) It is necessary, without scandalizing, peacefully and patiently, to get the faithful out of a certain number of false representations and fictions...

- ... there is preaching and catechesis. An article we published last April in the review Catechesis on the “Dutch Catechism” (...) earned us opposite reactions, although not formally contradictory: an old master, very much loved, wrote to us: “There is a misunderstanding about what a catechism is. The one we learned and that Charles Péguy never forgot was a true catechism, that is, a declaration of the principal truths of the Christian faith. I think I remember that we perceived very well the intentionally dogmatic and abstract character of the little book. It was the take-it-or-leave-it truth of salvation. We retained a sense that the truth of faith is not something that everyone is

Breaking up or not breaking up

authorized to interpret in his own way. Your so-called Dutch Catechism confuses the functions of the catechism and the catechist. As much as it is necessary for a catechism to be brief, dogmatic, and even dry in order to be dogmatically accurate, it seems to me to be dangerous for a printed,

personal, non varietur catechesis to be distributed to the faithful as the definition of the faith. The catechism is a teaching of the articles of faith as well as the commandments of God and the Church which must be the same for all, catechized and catechists alike. The human and personal approach to these truths and precepts must be left to the initiative of those who teach them.)e think that this “Introduction to the Catholic Faith” is not a catechism. “

- But here is the testimony of the experience made by a man who is at the head or at the forefront of catechetical research, Father Le Du: “During the month of April, I spent twenty-two evenings in a row in informal groups of this kind (lay people who question the faith) questioning themselves about the content of their faith. There are some exceptional discoveries (...); and there is also an unbridled demythization that is a little frightening, for sure... That is why I understand your reticence. (...) But finally, we are confronted, this time, with a dynamism and not with a corpse. It is all the better...”

What to do? Reaffirm the certainties? Yes, but not without taking on the questions or “bagatelleizing” the difficulties. Those who have tried this know that it is not easy.

In another journal, L'Église dans notre temps, of March 15, 1969, André Sève's reflections were on the Manuel catéchétique of Father Colomb. They evoked the thought of the theologian Karl Barth:

Faith, he said, must be translated into the language of the man in the street, into the language of those who are not used to reading the Bible or singing hymns and whose

60 - Centre national des archives de l'Église de France (CNAEF): clippings of various articles on religious education

in France, 74 CO 3, La Croix, August 2, 1969.

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means of expression and interests are absolutely different...

This was followed by a presentation of the work of Father Colomb. In eleven chapters, he spoke of “the necessary scientific religious anthropology of the catechized”, in other words, of a psychological, sociological and pedagogical way of approaching questions of faith.

The November 3, 1968 issue of *Témoignage Chrétien* offered a virulent attack against the republication of the 1937 catechism at the expense of Mr. Lemaire. In fact, the bishops of France had issued an order forbidding the republication of the catechism to all religious publishers⁶¹. Some lay people, scandalized by this decision, decided to have this catechism, to which they attached their integral profession of faith, republished at their own expense. The author of the article protests against them:

What kind of revelation has Mr. Lemaire received that allows him to assert so peremptorily that the episcopate of 1937 was more inspired than that of 1967? The matter would remain mysterious if we did not know that, for him and some others, the French bishops have sunk collegially into heresy... MM. Lemaire, Madiran, Salleron, seem to have wasted, up to now, their time and their effort. The New Catechism has been circulating for a few days in several hundred thousand binders...

This last sentence alluded to the haste with which the new catechism had just been distributed: the printers, having announced, according to episcopal directives, that their old stock “was exhausted”, were nevertheless forced to follow up on the orders of the catechists who were preparing the

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The new school year began 62 . They had to print the New Catechism in a hurry, a year before the scheduled date.

Stunned by the shortcomings of the new catechism, Mother Anne-Marie first tried to explain to the Archbishop of Toulouse, Bishop Guyot, her decision to refuse it for the houses of the Congregation.

The interview, which will be told later and often, was stormy:

- A little Mother General of a little Congregation," the prelate told him, "wants to show off to all the bishops of France? You think you know more than all the cardinals and bishops who have given their approval to the catechism! Do you know the sin of pride?

- But, Monsignor, have you read it?

- No!

- There is also a sin of laziness 63 ...

62 - For example, the Semaine religieuse of the diocese of Aire and Dax published the following statement: "Here are the details concerning the various manuals which are used in the diocese. C ' Usi ° n d ' ""other. By decision of the bishop and commonly second years), called

mutions of the diocese. There is no Z obl ' & atosres dam all Us parishes and ms healthy (large and small catechism, Petu NB ' Thus ' the old manuals di ° ""

not mentioned above) do not have the “W” emblem. Mice of bread or any other book Catholic institutions, high schools). The Urs now in our diocese (parishes, passages reproduces the original. typography that emphasizes in italics some

63 - It may be interesting to evoke Urs - .

1983, then in Paris on January 16, 1983, and then in Lyon on January 15, 1983, the conference given by the then prefect of the University of Lyon, General Ratzinger, on the subject of this famous catechism, the Catechism gives reason to the Roman More a. *posteriori* of the doctrine and the faith. It

Catechism teachers served “^‘Sue “. e ” vInt a cx P Ilc I ucr 9 U 1 ? a .

the catechetical teaching (‘T’Penda’, ‘C’ classical components and

Christian. This is what aff, ^’,’- They^ dcs ““les as device and summary of the Christian must believe (Sy m bo| e \ c t chi rres P° n <fent to the dimensions of 1 existence vital space it must accomp^ /’ Cs Pé r J^ e ^main, saying that it is found there what nifestement aims as defi r; Wotre Father) , do (Decalogue) and in which

do not def here P Father), do (Decalogue) and—,

***- and Church).” The catechisms were n

C ° n férence épiscopale understood it well an

Generalate of Mother Anne-Marie

Not finding in the person of the archbishop the support she had hoped for, the Superior General signed a petition to Cardinal Cicognani, Secretary of State for Vatican City, written by several priests and lay people.

Reverend Eminence,

It is with a sorrowful heart, but with great hope that we dare to appeal to your Reverend Eminence concerning the new French catechism.

The compulsory content and some adaptations have been published. The bishops of France, one after the other, promulgate the decree making this new catechism obligatory in their diocese. It is on this point that we are torn: indeed, on the one hand, we see in the bishops on whom we depend, the representatives of Our Lord, and we have the most ardent desire to submit ourselves wholeheartedly to their commandments. But on the other hand, our conscience as priests or as Christian parents absolutely forbids us to adopt this catechism in which it is impossible for us to recognize the content of the true faith. By adopting it, we would be certain to betray the true message of Our Lord, which we have always proclaimed with love to the children whom God has entrusted to us. Indeed

- Too many serious omissions disfigure the substance of the true faith: there is no longer any mention of our first parents, of the sin of the guardian angels, of the Ascension of the Mass as the sacrifice of Christ, of the dispositions necessary to be able to receive Communion, of renunciation, of the soul, *etc.*

- Some notions that remain are diverted from their true meaning: for example, Pentecost, the Church, the Pope, the bishops: not a word about the personal infallibility of the

Supreme Pontiff, nor about his personal power over the whole Church.

- Despite the proclamation at the beginning that one of the first aims of the new catechism is its biblical orientation, it is noticeable that most of the quotations from the Holy Scriptures are truncated or distorted.

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- This catechism is tainted, throughout, with naturalism.

Your Eminence will understand that in conscience we cannot accept to give such a teaching. We therefore beg your Reverend Eminence to take action with the competent Roman Sacred Congregations and with our Holy Father the Pope himself so that this catechism, which does not contain all the truths necessary for salvation, and which distorts them, may be withdrawn from circulation as soon as possible
6 .

At the same time, she wrote to Archbishop Garrone, who was in Rome at the time, to ask his opinion on the matter and to try to find the necessary support. The answer was dilatory. On February 3, 1969, the future cardinal wrote to her:

The question you ask me is not so much delicate as difficult. I need to know exactly to what extent the bishops of France consider this catechism to be binding on educational institutions. Only the Archbishop can answer this question with competence. On the other hand, I would have to have studied this catechism closely, which I have not had the opportunity to do. I have heard, through one or another document, the echo of the controversies that it has raised. It seems to me that many of the criticisms were really too

strong to be true. I had simply witnessed the early work that guided the pedagogy of these instruments, but I did not know them.

My first move is to tell you that the quality of education plays a much more important role in this matter than the text itself and that even through an instrument that one does not like or that one can criticize, a truly religious soul can communicate its faith 6S .

Not getting the help she had hoped for, Mother undertook to provide the Congregation with elements for reflection and work to judge the new catechisms. The document was distributed in the Congregation.

64 - Archives of the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus of Fanjeaux, collection of Mother Anne-Marie: collection of texts, newspaper clippings and personal correspondence on the new Mass and the new catechisms.

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This is an unsigned study of the new catechisms for the sixth and fifth grades. This document 66 begins by presenting the method of the new catechisms, after recalling that these books were distributed a little differently than the obligatory Common Fund for the middle school.

A basic document, an orientation text for the use of authors, was adopted by the plenary assembly of the French episcopate in 1969, in Lourdes. It is a short text: eight mimeographed pages completed by a five-page appendix of statistical, school and pedagogical data. The report is divided into three parts of unequal length:

- the Spirit at work in the world of youth.

< The dynamism of young people allows them to participate in the dynamism of the Church's mission.

- Church building in sixth and fifth grade.

The presentation then discusses the method of the new catechism, which it defines as a "pedagogy". It emphasizes that the themes composing the different programs "are independent enough from one another to be seen in an undetermined order". She notes that "the golden rule that should guide all sixth grade catechists seems to be to go at the pace of the young people. The very terms of the directives encourage this flexibility which should allow for the life of the group to be followed. The words "group" and "life of the group" come up regularly. The presentation also shows that the pedagogy followed consists essentially in a "doing together"... In this perspective, the work of memory is no longer based on questions and answers, but on summaries elaborated by the children themselves. In the same way, during the celebrations, which have an important place, it is the young people themselves who must choose the texts to be read. The presentation notes the insistence

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directives on "building a new world" and on "hope for a better world". She cites the themes presented: development of the earth, domination of the world, the fight against injustice, and mentions in support of this, sheet number 20, which she reproaches for teaching hope that has nothing in common with supernatural hope. Two detailed remarks point out, on the one hand, that for Christmas, there is only a prayer from "our Protestant brothers" to be read to the sixth

graders, a prayer which is that of the Reformed Church of France; and on the other hand, that “the whole is not of a very high intellectual level: testimonies, vague definitions, without precise words.

In a second part, the study lists the points which seem to him to be in contradiction with the traditional exposition of the faith and the teaching methods hitherto in use for the classes of the sixth and fifth grades:

A first observation is the anthropocentrism of the new catechism.

Everything is centered on man, in this case the pre-adolescent, and not on God and Revelation. (See With Jesus Christ, n° 7 page 2). Everything is subjective, starting from the subject and his experience. Examples: Sheet 12, page 8, “How is the Gospel good news for me?”. Sheet 4, page 3, photograph of a father and son. Will the child be able to trace the mystery? Card 5 page 2: “Say it with flowers”. Card 10: “A man among men”. Card 11: “A woman like any other”. (Page 2: “A young girl who loved a man: Joseph”)

A second remark is that this new catechism does not include any magisterial teaching:

The idea is to move at the pace of the young people. They try to learn a summary written by themselves. Everything must be discovered little by little by the adolescents. This is to deny Revelation and mystery. There is no mention of the Trinity, the Incarnation, grace, redemption, original sin, the immaculate conception, the Holy Spirit, the

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communion of saints, eternal life, angels, Satan, hell, purgatory.

A little further on, the criticism is even more virulent:

Faith is proposed. It is no longer the Catholic religion that seems to be proposed, but a religiosity that seems rather indeterminate, a vague deism and a humanitarianism colored by Biblicism.

The conclusion is radical:

All in all, we find in these cards a greater skill than in the new seventh and eighth catechisms. There is perhaps (?) not a formal teaching of heresy, but certainly a seemingly systematic refusal of a formal and traditional teaching of doctrine, a refusal that allows errors and complete inconsistency to distill. Our options? I should rather say “our positions”, because we have to evangelize children, to bring them the Revelation, the truth revealed by God to men, and this is not a matter of option: we do not have to choose. In the face of a certain intentional silence, in times of modernist apostasy, we must teach all the immutable doctrine of the holy Catholic Church 67 .

Mother Anne-Marie’s work on the catechisms and her opposition to the episcopal directives could not go unnoticed. Many bishops were irritated by these constant objections. The periodical of the diocese of Toulon-Fréjus, *Église de Fréjus-Toulon* 68 published in December 1968 a severe statement by Bishop Gilles Barthe:

A series of reflections have already appeared in *L’Église de Fréjus-Toulon* of September 8 on the new catechism. They are abundant and judicious, but I would like to emphasize, for my part, a few points that seem important to me.

11 It is certain that transmitting the word of God has never been and never will be easy. Especially in a climate like ours, as anarchic in the field of ideas as in

67 - Archives of the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus of Fangeaux, collection of Mother Magdeleine-de-Jésus Juès, file Catechism and Mass.

68 - Church of Fréjus-Toulon, n° 16.

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the area of morals. It is not easy, but we will succeed all the same if we take care to keep a certain unity in the way we do things. I have insisted on this unity for vocations, but I would like to repeat it for the whole of our pastoral work. For us, it is not simply a question of efficiency; it is our “sense of Church” that seems to me to be at stake. It is our “sense of Church” that seems to me to be at stake. This is true of the catechism as well as of the liturgy, of pastoral methods or of Catholic Action, for example. Nothing is more detrimental to us than the lack of docility to the directives given by the hierarchy. When a line of action is fixed, even on this or that point which does not suit us, it is a matter of giving up our personal views for the general interest and to work together.

With regard to the catechism, a new way of doing it was developed, largely justified by the circumstances: we chose the method by class and no longer by age and we adopted the new catechisms based on the obligatory Common Fund, the principle of which was the object of a unanimous option of the National Assembly of Bishops in Lourdes in 1966 (with one vote) 6 ‘.

In various ways, attempts have been made to devalue the scope of this decision in certain press organs or by means of mimeographed sheets, copies of which circulate in the presbyteries. It is not - I say this energetically - the systematic contestation of a few that prevents the voice of the hierarchy from being the only authorized one in these matters of catechetical teaching. You will therefore stick to the catechism adopted in the diocese. These remarks are of interest to all those involved in catechetics. I would like you to persuade those among the laity or religious who are still hesitating. I have learned that our Catholic institutions are not always the most faithful to

Bishop Maurice Gardon is interesting. "I have the impression of finding myself, at the hour of my final stage, in a painful disarray, invaded by the feeling of having suffered

A French bishop between crisis and renewal in the Church, ed. de l'Emmanuel, 2007.

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observe the instructions. This is extremely unfortunate because this lack of obedience leads to disobedience in other areas. And because it is a very bad way for children to be inserted into the Church to be told the opposite of what the Church officially says.

There was no doubt that the Saint-Dominique course in Toulon was among the Catholic institutions targeted.

Father Calmel had already given his response to the regular call of the bishops to unconditional obedience, in the name

of unity and the meaning of the Church. On November 11, 1968, he wrote to Mother Anne-Marie:

To understand that being of the Church of Christ is not always to be with the bishops, because they can betray, but it is always to be in communion with the Roman See, which cannot betray, I mean the Roman See *ut sic*, for example *Humanæ Vitæ* or the Profession of Faith. Since the Pope's Profession of Faith is obligatory, the bishop's catechism is not.

During this period of struggle, the extracts from Mother Anne-Marie's correspondence with Father Calmel, to whom she often sought advice without, moreover, ever really having made him her spiritual director, insist particularly on the role of prayer in order to face up to the isolation caused by the positions taken. On October 1, 1967, Father wrote: May you train them [the Sisters] to pray a lot. In order to face up to the isolation, to the kind that will be more and more the Congregation's, a more than ordinary prayer is needed (...). Take heart... We have not yet experienced all the loneliness that will be ours. In order to hold on simply knowing the loneliness to which we are exposed, the destitution to which we are exposed, we must pray well. *Jesu fortitudo martyrum, miserere nobis.*

On August 14, 1968, the Father clearly states his thoughts on the Obligatory Fund.

In the case of the Non-compulsory Fund, it must be clearly shown, by prohibiting it, that it contradicts the faith of Peter, which is still affirmed by Paul VI. In particular: 1. original sin,

2. the irreducibility of the Church to civilization, the opposition is even frontal. For the Binding Fund, there is no sin committed by our first parents and transmitted by generation; there is no privilege of Christians as to the supernatural rebirth by water and the Spirit.

And two months later, in October, this reflection: How to make the XXth century accept a religion of the transcendence of God, of his infinite love and of his cross? The answer has always been: the courage of preaching, nourished by prayer, loving sacrifice. (...) The answer of the Obligatory Fund ', by emptying the Christian religion of what makes it beautiful: grace and the cross; what will make us not have troubles nor persecutions. Betrayal.

In the houses, some Sisters had already turned to a living pastoral ministry. This was the case, for example, of Sister Marie-Jeanne Toulouse. In principle, the prioresses were to keep the old catechism, but some were very difficult to convince. Several of them had been set up by Mother Marie-Rose. The fracture occurred under her generalate, for Mother Marie-Angélique Lescouzère had tried to maintain the spirit of Mother Hélène Jamet. This difference of opinion at the head of the Congregation led Mother Anne-Marie to choose the theme of the teaching of the catechism for the meeting of prioresses which took place from September 3 to 7, 1967.

Mother Hélène and Father Calmel had given much thought to the program of Christian doctrine of the Congregation. Abandoning the old one (grace, morals, liturgy, dogma), they had established a program based on the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas and experimented with it in the school of the Annunciation. At first, it was distributed - God, the Trinity.

- Redemption, grace.

. The Church.

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Then a fourth year was added, distributing the concepts slightly differently. Already at that time this change had provoked long and delicate discussions...

Mother Anne-Marie took it up again and tried to revive it where it was beginning to disappear in favor of the new demands of national catechesis.

But another fight came at this moment to mobilize his forces in even more important proportions.

The mass

This third battle was that of the Mass known as the Mass of St. Pius V. In 1969, a new Ordo Miss* was proposed to the universal Church. The Tridentine Mass, however, was not abolished. For several years, the situation in the Congregation was somewhat confused, but it evolved. Thus, at the Annunciation School, after an initial acceptance of the new Ordo, two statutes were put in place, beginning in 1972. The chaplain - or the Dominican fathers - said Mass according to the modifications of the rite, while another abbot, Father Abrahamovitch, said the Tridentine Mass in the novitiate and for the students who wished to do so, with the authorization of Bishop André Collini, provided that the celebration did not take place in the main chapel. Elsewhere, the attitude often depended on the prioress. Montréjeau, Bordeaux, Grasse, Tarbes took the new Ordo Misse immediately. But in Grasse, Father Le Boulch, then Bishop Parolek, soon assured the Tridentine rite; the official

chaplain was Father Parisse who offered the students the celebration of the new Ordo.

The speed with which some of the Congregation followed the reforms of the Council is a reminder that the situation was not fixed in the Institute. Surprised by circumstances unprecedented in the history of the Church, the Sisters were faced with an exceptional situation. The directors

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Were the official guidelines that radically disrupted traditions to be followed without discussion? Did they allow for legitimate protest? Should one try to conform to them to the limit of what was possible? Did the commitments made in the institute when the vows were taken justify resistance to everything that contradicted these promises? St. Thomas, in the Summa, had long ago raised this delicate question of the relationship between prudence and obedience. Can and should a subject obey unconditionally all orders received? Or, if he has the duty to question the nature of the order received, does not this prudence break the reality of obedience?

These questions were not rhetorical. In the eyes of the Sisters, they involved not only the survival of their Congregation, but also their eternity, since the tradition of the Church links the sanctification of religious to the most perfect possible exercise of their rule.

This period also shows that the unity of the Congregation was no longer perfect at that time, despite the attachment of the Sisters to their Superior General. The responses to the questions raised by the evolution of the Church were not unanimous.

At that time, the Congregation met Father Raymond Dulac. Mother Anne-Marie knew him first through the articles he published in *La Pensée catholique*. His reflections often echoed the concerns of the Superior. A priest from Versailles, he had a house in Sète where the Sisters were soon able to meet him in order to take his advice as a canonist. Competent and precise in his advice on canon law, he

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brought to the Sisters who asked him for answers to questions related to religious obedience in the delicate circumstances of the time. The question of the Mass was becoming more and more burning. After the modifications of 1965, the new *Ordo Missæ* of 1969 introduced a real change in the liturgy which seemed difficult to reconcile with the missal of Saint Pius V. Divided between her obedience to the Roman directives and her “sense of faith” which made her reluctant to accept the new *Ordo Missæ*, Mother Anne-Marie agreed on this subject with the Prelate of Ecône, whom she was to meet for the first time only two years later. The latter explained his position to the seminarians as follows: We have never refused certain changes, certain adaptations which testify to the vitality of the Church. In liturgical matters, this is not the first reform that men of my age have witnessed: I had just been born when St. Pius X was concerned with making improvements, especially by giving more importance to the temporal cycle, by advancing the age of first communion for children and by restoring liturgical chant, which had become obscure. Pius XII later reduced the duration of the Eucharistic fast because of the difficulties inherent in modern life, authorized for the same

reason the celebration of Mass on the first afternoon, moved the office of the Easter Vigil to the evening of Holy Saturday, remodeled the offices of Holy Week, and John XXIII himself made a few alterations, before the Council, to the rite known as the rite of Saint Pius V. But none of this came close to what took place in 1969, namely a new conception of the Mass.⁷¹

Another thing is the reform of Pope Paul VI. The reform of John XXIII was done in the same spirit as that of St. Pius X. (...). (...) Whereas when we move on to the reform of Paul VI, then there are other principles, this ecumenical fire that presided over the whole reform with the Protestants. This really endangers our faith. We see it every day. Among

71 - Spiritual Conference at Ecône, COSPEC 100-A, March 15, 1983.

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All those who use this liturgy, we see their faith diminish, we see them become Protestants, little by little, taking on a Protestant mentality. So at that point, we have a duty to resist, not only the right, but the duty to resist this diminution of our faith.

The Superior of the Holy Name of Jesus confided to Father Dulac her reservations about the new Ordo Missæ, her desire to offer the Sisters the possibility of continuing to follow the Mass according to the Tridentine rite, and her questions about an alleged ban on this ancient Mass.

Through him, Mother Anne-Marie decided to ask Rome for an inducement for the entire Congregation. Father Dulac's letter was dated October 11, 1970. She asked that the

Sisters be allowed to continue to celebrate Holy Mass according to the rite of the Roman Missal of St. Pius V in the chapels of their houses and colleges, at least when it is a question of “community Masses” and, likewise, when the large number of students attending Mass are capable of understanding this rite with fruit and desire it.

The very next day, Cardinal Benno Gut had replied, on the petitioner’s own letter, the following words: *Secundum preces cum benedictione nostra*, followed by his signature. As we shall see,⁷³ this inducement was subsequently denied to Mother Anne-Marie, because it had not been issued in a canonical manner, but on a purely personal basis by Cardinal Gut, without committing in any way the authority of the Congregation for Divine Worship, of which he was then prefect. Various arguments were presented to deny its validity: the paper reserved for the dicastery had not been used, there was no protocol number, no signature with the title of prefect, no seal of the Congregation for Divine Worship.

72 - Spiritual Conference at Ecône, COSPEC 100-B, May 20, 1983.

73 - Cf. p. 275.

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At that moment, referring to this inducement, Mother Anne-Marie was able to allow the houses that so desired to keep the Tridentine Mass. Elsewhere, the new rite was used. But when she visited the latter houses, Mother Anne-Marie, although Superior General, did not attend the community

Masses and sought a priest of the traditional rite in the region.

At the same time that she took a stand for the Mass of St. Pius V, Mother Anne-Marie also fought for the translations of the texts of Sacred Scripture in the Mass and in the Office. In one of her letters, she explained her thinking:

The French translations killed the sacredness of the mass. Latin alone could translate the force of the dogma.

Based on this certainty, the Superior first tried to protect the Congregation from the devaluation of the Office by imposing translations into the vernacular. This time she turned to the Master General of the Order, Fr. A close exchange of correspondence from 1970 to 1974 tried to obtain help and support from the highest authority of the Dominican Order. In her desire to protect the Office, Mother extended her solicitude to all the Congregations of the Order:

In accordance with the authorization you have kindly granted," she wrote on April 15, 1970, "our Congregation continues to use, in the majority of communities, the Dominican breviary in Latin according to the rubrics indicated in the Orio of 1970.

As the use of the French breviary, Prière du Temps Présent, is becoming more widespread in many Congregations, we wanted to let you know of our desire to continue to recite the Office in Latin. In order to leave this possibility to those Congregations that wish it, and to encourage common prayer when members of different Congregations are gathered for study days or sessions, we strongly hope that you will make sure that the future breviary

“is at least bilingual if it is not only

She then explained the reasons for her attachment to Latin: Our Congregation, composed exclusively of teaching Sisters, sees in the use of Latin such a richness that it does not envisage being able to renounce it. The attempts, loyally made, of an office in French, only confirm us in our choice: the few successes noted require skills and long hours of preparation that our life generally does not allow us.

In this first letter, the superior was content with secondary reasons. The Master General’s reply was brief:

Mother,” he wrote on April 24, 1970, “the problems of the different Congregations and houses are different.

I have only one desire, that each Congregation and house of the Order celebrate the Divine Office with the greatest possible fervor.

The Dominican Breviary in Latin meets your needs. I can only rejoice at that. Strictly speaking, you do not need any authorization to continue in this way. No one is required to recite the Office in the vulgar language.

The publication of a bilingual breviary does not depend on the Order. We will use the Roman Breviary. For the specifically Dominican feasts which will have a special office, a supplement is only foreseen.

But when the tensions with the bishops became more violent, and the superior sought support from him, the Master of the Order recommended obedience to the hierarchy of the Church: “It is obvious that you must be very careful not to oppose the liturgical norms of the Church or those of any other area. And if you find it opportune not to observe any of the rules, you should ask for a dispensation

and not present it as an opposition or as a right. In this atmosphere of friendliness and cooperation, you will obtain much more.

This spirit of cooperation with what is established by the Church, certainly, will not diminish the seriousness and fervor

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of your religious life, nor will it diminish vocations.

I say all this without prejudging in any way your position or the Visitor's dispositions, for I can assure you that no one has asked me any questions or informed me. (...) To you and to all the nuns of your Congregation, I wish the splendors of light of these mysteries of the Epiphany and bless them in our father Saint Dominic 74 .

Immediately, Mother Anne-Marie answered:

I have no intention of being controversial or of opposing the directives of the people of the Church, Reverend Father, when they are in conformity with the traditional doctrine.

I only maintain firmly and as peacefully as possible the rights which are ours. It is my wish, and that of many of the Sisters and Fathers who are well known, that the Order, aware and proud of its privileges, should preserve them rather than renounce them. The fact that the last Chapter made the decision to join the Roman Rite did not in any way abolish the privilege "in itself" of the Order; several canonists have affirmed or confirmed this to me. The Order has in fact renounced the privilege of the Dominican Rite, but the privilege "in itself" remains; the Holy Father has not abolished it. And it is my fervent wish that it be restored to honor in the Order. Among so many contradictory and

confusing experiences in the Church today, there is room for the maintenance of the Dominican Rite as well as the Ambrosian Rite in Milan: this is the doctrine to which I adhere.⁷⁵

The response of the master general, although gentle, is a new call to obedience:

In conscience," he wrote, "you thought you had to intervene in the Court of Rome. You have done well. The road is now quite clear.

I pray that you will accept each day, with the faith and deference that His Excellency Bishop Mayer speaks of in his letter, the decisions that have been made by those in authority

74 - Archives of the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus of Fanjeaux, collection of Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin, letter of January 12, 1974. Prot. N° 740108/AV. 8.

75 - Letter dated January 31, 1974.

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to speak to us "in the name of Christ on earth". Our profession and our baptism oblige us to do so. Only this submission, which I hope you will make, will give you and each of your sisters the spiritual peace and joy that I ask the Lord for every day.

As for the Dominican Rite, I must tell you that you have been misled. From now on we must all follow the Roman Rite. The next General Chapter of the Order will only have the opportunity to pronounce itself on the few particular

elements of the old rite which we can ask the Holy See to resume. Despite the regrets that may be felt, believe me that the decision to abandon our rite was not taken without reflection and for obvious reasons. To be faithful to the directives of the Order as well as to those of the Church is not to be revolutionary, but on the contrary to show that obedience of which we have made a profession.⁷⁶

The debate that opposed her to the Master General had slipped into the question of the Dominican or Roman rites by which she hoped to circumvent the obligation made by the bishops of France, in spite of the Roman directives which always advised the use of Latin, to use exclusively the translations in the vernacular languages. But in reality, on many occasions, Mother Anne-Marie had explained the reasons for her attachment to the Latin language for the liturgical prayer of the Church. Her reasons went beyond the strict framework of the breviary. First of all, she spoke of the need to render to God “a worship that is pleasing to him”, and liturgists had long since fixed the languages used in the Catholic liturgy at three: Greek, Hebrew (for a small part of the texts) and Latin - the same three languages that Christ’s contemporaries had been able to read on the sign above the Savior’s cross. A second argument was the universality of Latin, a precious auxiliary of the catholicity of the Church. Finally, the fixity of Latin made it possible to state

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a stable doctrine to express eternal truths. But the Mother’s fundamental claims did not find a favorable echo in the French episcopal hierarchy.

From a human perspective, Mother Anne-Marie’s battles all seemed to end in failure. But it took more than that to drain her energy.

In recalling this very combative Generalate, the historian who looks at the personality of this Superior General cannot help but wonder about the type of teacher that Mother Anne-Marie was. After all, the work of the Congregation which she defended so vigorously was indeed the teaching and education of young girls.

the school work of the Congregation

In fact, even if the struggles we have just mentioned, carried out in parallel on three fronts, were the dominant note of Mother Anne-Marie's generalate, it would be incomplete not to mention also the great work of deepening teaching that was carried out during this same period, within the Congregation and in a unanimity that the relationship of the persons who were to open the next chapter of election would salute without any reservation.

It is difficult to summarize in a few lines Mother Anne-Marie's personal work in the field of teaching and education. But her numerous conferences to parents of students allow us to grasp something of her thinking. One finds in the course of these texts, always very well worked out, the recurring themes which form the guiding line of her conception of Christian education. It should be noted, however, that the dates of most of the conferences to parents in which she expounded her thought are later than 1974. If these meetings are indeed an illustration of Mother's ideas on the work proper to the Congregation, it is clear that the years 1967-1974, so troubled by

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The events that shook the Church after the Second Vatican Council did not allow Mother to write real treatises on the subject. In a way, it was not until the more tranquil years

that she was able to clearly and constructively express the thought that underpinned all of her actions during her generalate. The struggles of that time were the fruit of her very demanding conception of the vocation of a Dominican teacher.

First of all, let us recall that Mother Anne-Marie had entered the novitiate at the time when Father Calmel and Mother Hélène were working on the revision of the constitutions. Father Calmel, then at the height of his influence on the Congregation, had helped the Sisters to reflect on the nature of a truly Catholic education, as he had perfectly defined it in his book, *A Renewed Christian School*. Mother Anne-Marie, for whom Father often acted as secretary, had been able, throughout her novitiate, to collect articles by Father, handwritten notes that he gave her and that she kept precious, and mimeographed courses. An abundant file, put together by Mother, contains a collection of reflections on the school programs in the different subjects and on the methods to be used to nourish the intellectual life of young Christian girls.

Examples must be taken. Mother Anne-Marie's files contain many memories of this.

In August 1951, Father gave a lecture on the Church history program for the ninth grade, covering the period from 1789 to 1870, and on how to teach it. He began by defining the difficulty of such a course: it lies in the fact that the Church of that painful period

is composed at the same time of sinful members whom it brings to holiness and eternal life through the gift of Christian grace, and of members who refuse to be saved. Seen from this perspective, the history of the Church offers a tragic spectacle well suited to purify our faith.

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A list of benchmarks to be given to children throughout the year is then developed. At the end of the program, students should know:

- The list of popes and their dates.
- The list of new evangelized lands.
- The new Congregations founded and the old Orders restored.
- The list of saints with dates, and by categories (martyrs, pontiffs, confessors, virgins, etc.)
- The list of dogmas and the point of the Revelation they explored.
- The list of councils.
- The list of major relationships between the Church and the State
- The list of appearances.

As you can see, the project is not without ambition! It is then a question of having a master idea that will cross the whole course. The Father exposes it:

It will emerge from all this that the Church of the end of the Old Regime has its “face obscured and walks, staggering, its way in the abandonment of men”, in the words of Claudel. Why did this happen? Because the Revolution only made clear what the disappearance of Christianity, which began with the Renaissance, meant. That is why, from 1789 to

1870, the Church has counted many saints, but in the things of civilization, she has very few saints: very few of her sons have given testimony of her in the things of civilization.

The rest of the lecture illustrates some of the points of the program: evocation of the saints, questions to ask the students, *etc.* A bibliography completes the lecture, directing the teachers' reading toward the broad and overarching views rather than the details.

This example, taken from a multitude of others, was carefully preserved by the future Mother General. In the same way, she noted the advice given by the Father in the pedagogical field.

Father organized regular meetings on the work of teaching. He proposed to start from one or several articles

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of the constitutions, then gave an outline of the course of the days:

Sung Mass if possible. I do not know if the Sisters perceive the importance of this preliminary liturgy. It is not accessory, this liturgy, but essential for the meeting to be on the right level. Const. 9, 120, 128.

Then he set the activities:

Two parts: a) Lecture of experiments, b) Lecture or annotated reading that may not be of immediate use.

The lecture must always be preceded by a quarter or half hour of silence during which each Sister is asked to meditate

and write down what she knows about the subject in question. After this verification by each one of her knowledge or ignorance, the Sister in charge of the talk questions each of the Sisters. Then the talk 77 .

The content of the meetings was oriented towards a better formation of the children through the subjects taught. For example, a working meeting for literary subjects set the goal as follows: "To know under what conditions a civilization makes men 'more men' or on the contrary dehumanizes them... "How can these ideas be put into practice? One could look at what love, honor, fidelity, the good of the state, authority and freedom, the submission of the temporal to the spiritual, represent through the great works of literature, painting, but also through liturgy, spirituality, the relationship between Church and State. For example:

- Middle Ages: honor, loyalty, love, through the great chansons de geste. Sense of freedom through satirical literature. Love of God through the great religious monuments, art, donations to abbeys, liturgical life. Submission or insubordination of the king to the pope in what concerns the spiritual. Deviation from courtly love.

11 - All the texts quoted here are taken from the archives of the Congregation of Saint-Nomde-Jésus of Fanjeaux, Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin's collection, Des matières sco

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- For the Renaissance, the XVII and the XVIIIth centuries: same themes. See the paganization of love, the exaltation of formal beauty, the taste for easy life and enjoyment through

poets and painters, the “worldly” sense of honor. See also what remains profoundly true and healthy in an Agrippa d’Aubigné, a Drelincourt, a Corneille - in spite of his duels -, in the painting not only of Georges de La Tour, but also in the peasants of Le Nain. See the secularization of the State by the Concordat of 1516, exploited almost dishonestly by the kings of France; the high ecclesiastical offices at the service of the ambitions and financial needs of the nobility, the slackening of the too rich abbeys; but also Saint Vincent de Paul, the reform of the Carmel and its introduction in France; Saint JeanBaptiste de La Salle and the popular schools. To see the distorted notion of liberty in the freedom of conscience as well as in the freedom of judgment and political liberty. To see how much a Rabelais, but especially a Montaigne contributed to insinuate in the cultivated classes this liberalism of the spirit, this universal indulgence and comprehension for all that emanates from man, this new absolute.

- For the XVth century: the Revolution with its consequences: to see that all that the people of the XVth century asked for privately will be claimed on the level of the State. See the weakening of the notions of honor, fidelity, love. The birth of the primacy of the useful, of the efficient. The power put at the service of this efficient; the reversal of the idea of authority: one no longer obeys a man, illusory representative of the non-existent divine authority; one obeys the law, tyrant become impersonal and emanating from the general will. Uprooted will, without link with the nature of the man. Consequences: inhuman civilization of the 19th century with child labor from the age of five, squalid slums, insecurity in the face of disease, the exhausting rhythms of machines. The enrichment of the few; the impoverishment of the many. To see all this through literary or artistic works. See also the new messianism,

source of the Marxist messianism. The myth of progress: man will be happy by his own means, immediately, on earth

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and without God. God is the enemy, because we have preached resignation in his name for too long.

The power of synthesis that these few excerpts reveal, the profound demands that the Father brought to his reflection on Catholic education, were for Mother Anne-Marie, as they were for Mother Hélène, a dazzling experience. In a very personal way, but marked by this formation, Mother Anne-Marie sought throughout her Generalate to continue this work of deepening the teaching work of the Congregation. Her correspondence with the Father during these years is studded with reflections that recall this concern: "May the Sisters who have the most sense of school implore a thousand times a day to have a fully Christian sense of school... "For example, Father wrote in July 1967. In April 1969, referring to the school at La Péraudière, he noted some positive points which seemed interesting for the Congregation:

De la Péraudière, remember for you others :

- Parents who are one with the educators, trusting them so much that they can be said to be one with them, so that the child cannot "play" between two more or less antagonistic educational environments (school and family). This assumes, of course, that the school works with only a few families.
- Entirely free school; not touching any state land, establishing its own program...

Powerfully helped by this training and by this advice, Mother Anne-Marie displayed a personal charism in this work of teaching that no one ever challenged her. Always active, she sought without tiring of the means to make her pupils develop a personal thought, the mark of a living spirit. With her astonishing inventiveness, she never let her enthusiasm as a teacher wane. Every year she would joyfully evoke the feast of Saint Bede, whose death she had learned while tracing the last letter of her translation of the psalms; she would tell anyone who would listen that she wished to die with chalk at her side.

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hand. In fact, she will give her last Greek lesson to the philosophy class ten days before her death 78 ...

Several times, Mother will explain what she means by the term “Christian education”: it is a matter of giving the students access to a Christian culture.

You have entrusted your children to us,” she writes, “so that we may give them a true and solid Christian culture, so that, following your example and with you, we may open their minds, their hearts and their souls to the values of truth, beauty and goodness.

Open-mindedness: the word comes up very often in the writings of Mother who conceived teaching as a task of awakening the soul. She would clarify her thinking:

We want to awaken the minds of children, which is not easy at the present time because they are often cluttered, not with true knowledge, but with diverse and disordered information, often incoherent and contradictory. In order to be the awakening men and women of children’s minds that we must be, “it is enough to love them and to love to

communicate the truth to them” and it is necessary to “love them”.

78 - The sermon of the chaplain of the house of Romagna, house where she died, during the Requiem Mass that he celebrated before the students of the school, on June 18, 2014, evokes this well: “Her life, her vocation, were the children and the education of I.hk: ni,’ , nmir the good God How to remain inactive. When behind the door of her

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It is necessary “to let this love descend to the intelligence” so that we become capable of “communicating a singing and germinating truth “80 .

And further:

For years our effort (...) has been to open your daughters to the life of the mind, to awaken them to the true life of the mind, that is to say, to a lively and thoughtful attention; if we succeeded only in making them aware that there is a life of the mind, we would not have wasted our time altogether.⁸¹

This awakening of the spirit is presented above all as an attention nourished by admiration and love for the truth.

The word “truth” appears in each of Mother’s conferences. It comes back like a watchword that is constantly repeated: The teaching itself that we want to give to your children is nothing other than a communication of truth. We want to give them an intellectual formation that is as vast and as exact as possible, because we believe in culture, in the formation of the mind, but on condition that this culture, far from being the only response to a curiosity of the mind - even a legitimate one - is illuminated by truth, bathed in

charity and is communicated in beauty. We would like to communicate to your children the love of truth, the cult of beauty and the passion for the good 82 ...

In response to this teaching of truth, Mother expected her students to “actively and obediently accept this truth. 85 And she placed the other requirements in the wake of this love of truth:

We do not despise the habits to be taken or to be made to take, we even put constraint and tenacity, when it is necessary, to obtain certain rites (...). For we have no illusions about the virtue of right ideas which,

80 - Conference to parents on April 21, 1990. The three quotes are from Father Calmel.

81 - Conference to the parents on October 12, 1991.

82 - Conference to parents on January 12, 1986.

83 - Conference to parents on March 10, 1991: Mother waxes an expression of Father Calmel.

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unfortunately, can remain cerebral and not inform life. (...)
But for the formation of Christian character, which is our goal, we believe that what we must first foster is not theories, but fidelity to the light, which presupposes that light has been given, and a light that can be received and loved. Our first concern, then, is to give light and to be such, with God’s grace, that this light may be desired and loved and that it may change lives.84

This love of truth was to have as a corollary to teach children to think straight.

What means did La Madre propose for attaining this high and somewhat theoretical ideal? The circulars recall first of all the importance of the hierarchy of subjects: the excerpt that we have quoted makes a large part of the reflections of Father Calmel taken from his book *École chrétienne renouvelée*.

As you know, the teaching of Christian doctrine is first in our houses; then comes the teaching of French, because “French authors have a privileged importance for the formation of the mind and the heart”, and we also give all their importance to the courses of philosophy and history which are also privileged strongholds orienting well or badly the mind of the child. (...) However “the Christian school for girls does not consist of a class of Christian doctrine, added to a class of French, to which is added a class of mathematics, which is finally crowned by a class of history and some exercises of gymnastics: the whole having been interlarded with languages and sciences. The Christian school does not consist in the presentation of juxtaposed subjects but in the presentation of the same truth, whole, beautiful and coherent, which is the constant nourishment of the teachers, and which they communicate with a serene enthusiasm, through the various disciplines, of which they respect, however, their own requirements 85 .”

84 - Conference to parents on October 25, 1991.

85 - Conference to parents on October 12, 1991.

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This excerpt draws the reader's attention to a point that was the fruit of a long battle on the part of Mother: that of the primacy of the humanities over the teaching of the sciences for the formation of the mind. If we look at the circulars addressed to parents, we can say that Mother took every opportunity to remind them of the importance she attached to this choice of a human culture in the noblest sense of the word. Among the many extracts that could be quoted, some are very revealing:

We give priority to literary training over scientific training, which some of you may find annoying. Why? Because we think that by reading authors and texts, while trying to make your daughters progress in the handling of our French language and other languages, we try to make them reason, to make them think and at the same time, to make them penetrate in the knowledge of man. For the reading of writers reveals more or less the mystery of man, as well as the lines of force of your civilization in which they live... Through the reading of authors, we want to give your daughters a solid, critical, thoughtful and Christian conception of man, of human life, of the city and of temporal realities. At school, what forms girls the most, even more than boys, is the contact with beautiful works and philosophical and theological doctrine that "express man as a Vusage of his freedom and not as a knowledge of human nature.

Later, she clarified her thoughts:

Without denigrating or despising the contribution and the richness of a scientific culture, we want to put it in its subordinate place. (...) Since it is neither science nor mathematics that gives us the last word on man and his

destiny, we want your daughters to be capable of loving the truth, of judging man, his nature, his state, his freedom, his finality, life, death, love, society, art... To prepare your daughters for their mission as women, wives and mothers or consecrated persons,

86 - Conference to parents on January 27, 1984.

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“both for the Church and the kingdom of God and for the domestic life and temporal order of our carnal homelands, we have recourse to the lights of theological and philosophical wisdom”. This culture is done mainly through Christian doctrine and the reading of authors. And “if we have recourse to the reading of authors, it is not for the only literary pleasure, but it is because they speak to us” - good or bad - of the man and his destiny. For “there is no great literary work that does not touch on the metaphysical and even theological. But it is by concrete intuition, by existential evocation”. It is thus “in view of a right understanding and a right orientation of man and his destiny” that we resort to this reading. Certainly, literary works by themselves do not explain man, his destiny, but they make us feel him in truth; and it is up to the philosophers and theologians to help us to grasp the speculative justification, to release it for itself and to contemplate it in itself. Neither science nor mathematics teaches us what we are meant to know: our nature and the Lord God. That is why, I repeat, we want above all to enable your daughters to acquire Christian wisdom.⁸⁷

This ambitious project did not seem impossible to Mother. No matter how difficult it seemed, she believed it was possible,

provided that teachers, parents and students were willing to make no concessions to half measures. This concern for the absolute, without restriction, is also found in each of the pages written by Mother. Explicit or implicit, it runs through her conferences:

I would like you to support me more in the work of evangelizing the hearts, souls and minds of your children. There are too many restrictions on the part of some people and these words: “yes... but”, which are those of a compromise, are too often heard 88 .

87 - Conference to parents, October 10, 1992. The passages in quotation marks are from *A'École chrétienne renouvelée*, chap. II.

88 - Conference to parents on September 17, 1981.

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Further on, she adds:

The first conviction that we want to give your children is that life is serious and worth living, provided that it is lived seriously. (...) The first habitus (which is a naturally acquired stable disposition) that we want your children to acquire is that of doing serious things seriously.

In support, she quotes René Bazin:

I would like the child to come home and not hear lightly of what is serious, and not be exposed to the destruction of the noble and healthy ideas he receives at school by his own family. (...)

I would like the father to be, in this intimate family, the constant teacher of energy, and that he would not only be concerned with the truth, but also with the constant nobility of the child 90 .

What practical means did Mother use to achieve her high ideal? Like all teachers gifted with genius, she refused to use ready-made means that would have produced identical results in all the students, means that would have been reassuring for the discipline of the school and that would have led to satisfactory results at the time of the baccalaureate exams, but that were opposed to a profound formation. She encouraged the Sisters to develop the inventive genius of each pupil: In the appreciation of their duties we first encourage originality, inventive genius, while taking into account material perfection. In reading, we try to achieve both the understanding of words and ideas and a well-done reading. It is necessary that the children have the intelligence of the words used and it is necessary at the same time that they feel and make feel that a well done reading facilitates the comprehension of a thought and puts order in the thought and in the expressed feelings (...). "There is a poetic way

89 - Confen

90 - Confen

; 1988.

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of revealing the light of words, there is a lexicographical way of volatilizing their mystery. True clarity is a friend of mystery 91 ."

The reading of these extracts raises the question of the practical implementation of the proposed ideal. What kind of teacher was Anne-Marie's mother? It is difficult to say, because the course preparations cannot account for the real life that animated her classes. A work, written by her when she was still a novice student, gives a glimpse of her originality of spirit and of the unacademic way in which she presented things, even if it is difficult to discern in these notes the part that belongs to Father Calmel. It was about how to approach a literature course given to ninth grade students on Romanticism. Here is what she wrote:

In the ninth grade, are the romantics usable and beneficial? It's simple. Did they speak to you? And by what did they speak to you? This is the place to start. Without completely writing the course which would be essential, here is at least indicated the direction according to which I would have these gentlemen read to little Christian girls:

- First of all, not to "block" on the question of literary school. The title would easily incline to it: but the literary schools, among the Greeks, the Spaniards, the Germans, are indeed of interest. But to read authors with fruit is to read them in themselves, even if one takes into account the history of their school.

- Local colors, taste for history, false gothic, more colorful style, freer literary genre, there is all this in this literary school.

- But the most serious, what dominates everything, is the "yetalage" of the self, not to say the exhibition.

But all this is well known and overused. How do we make children understand it? I would proceed as follows:

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- Today, the display of the self infects the letters (Mauriac and his weekly Diary 1 , that he used to serve us in L'Express...)

- It is admitted that an author can make the public the witness of all his aberrations under the pretext of sincerity.

I would explain that a little bit, then ask:

- Who started it? It was Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

- How should we judge this? Severely. Can talent justify exhibition? No.

Then I would show the epic breath that was surely found by Péguy in the poem Eve. The myth of progress still more or less at work in some heads. I would explain. Then I'd move on to Hugo: his epic dimension and his idiocies about progress. (A word on the still existing idiocy of the romantic ideal of love... Cérigo ' 2 says this in a noble way; Georges Sand in a repulsive way. Victor Hugo is a romantic if you like: in any case, the strongest poetic voice of the century).

I would evoke the Church of this period, which was repairing the ruins of the Revolution and experiencing a prodigious missionary boom: but no theologians, no critical exegetes, and a too general inattention to the frightening rise of liberal capitalism. It was the time of faux-Gothic churches and sweet, languid books of piety...

In short, starting from now, to make a tour among the writers and thinkers of the nineteenth century, to better grasp the current currents of thought, to better become aware of the

deviations, to know which roads have not disappointed; and obviously to learn to write by frequenting those who have written well; to realize the enlargement that they have given to literary expression. But to read these gentlemen while not ceasing to evoke the great current writers: Bloy, Péguy, Bernanos, Claudel.

Thus conducted, the French class allows for a human culture, does not take us out of our time, does not cut us off from prayer and forms the little Christians.

92 - Victor Hugo, "Cérigo", Les Contemplations.

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PS: Read especially the great Victor Hugo who is the one who has something to say: sorry father - indignant citizen - admirer of the first Napoleon - and honest man - visionary of some episodes of human history. When he has something to say, he is able to find stanzas as nostalgic and as powerful as this refrain of the punishments: Oiseaux qui passent nos chaumières,

Winds that pass by - our Sisters, our mothers.

Are there, crying night and day,

Birds, tell them our miseries!

O winds, bring them our love".

More explicit is the testimony of some former students who benefited from her courses. Evoking the attachment of her whole family to the Dominicans, one of them wrote

This attachment was born of trust, I must say, of trust in a person. Mother Anne-Marie is (I will not say “was” because she is still present in our doubts, our hesitations and our decisions) a person who deserved our trust: born of a large family, Mother Anne-Marie had an authority and a requirement that did not let anything pass. All the alumnae will remember the impression that “You are expected at the office of Mother Prioress. “But all this authority had only one goal: the salvation of the souls of the children entrusted to her. One day when, during a test that we had to repeat, I had the misfortune to ask about the grade: “Does it count? “I was told in no uncertain terms: “It counts for the salvation of your soul! “This sentence struck me more than the biggest slap, and I still have the mark of it: all the meanness of the stupidly scholastic student was castigated, and at the same time work, life took on another dimension.

Trust in a person to whom we could entrust everything. A pain, a decision to be made? Mother Anne-Marie had a very special way of listening: attentive, warm, always having the word that uplifts and brings us back to the essential. The loss

93 - Archives of the Congregation of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus of Finjeaux, collection of Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin, notes from 1955.

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of a loved one: hope. The choice of a good husband: madness And we only had to look at her, radiant, to find charity in her 94 .

The testimonies and documents cited shed light on a facet of Mother Anne-Marie’s personality which had such a strong influence on the Congregation.

In reality, during her first generalate, Mother Anne-Marie had to face the difficulties raised by the aggiornamento of the Church and the practical questions linked to the modifications of the conception of Catholic education: co-education, school contracts, the revolution of May 68, the dress of the young girls, the use of television and leisure in a changing society...

The acute awareness of having to transmit an entirely Catholic teaching went hand in hand with the attachment to the practical moral requirements that flowed from this Christian formation. This is why Mother Anne-Marie was, for example, so virulent on the question of dress, despite the pressure of the parents and even the bishops. In Montréjeau, for example, the vice-president of the APEL, M. Vallet, addressed these lines to her:

Reverend Mother,

We would like to draw your attention to a problem that is taking on such proportions that the members of the APEL of Sainte-Germaine school feel obliged to bring it to your attention.

Indeed, the ban on our children wearing pants is disapproved by almost all parents. Some families are even seriously considering withdrawing their children from our school if an exemption to this ban is not made immediately.

94 - Testimony of M[™] Rémi Cathala, on the occasion of the forty years of Ja Congregation of the Holy Name-of-Jesus of Fanjeaux and one year after the death of Mother Anne-Marie.

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We must recognize that winter is long and rigorous in our regions; that on the other hand, tights are very expensive and not very strong, that some families cannot afford to renew them as often as necessary.

On the local level, a very unpleasant atmosphere has been created which our girls are paying for, and this situation has worsened since we know, from reliable sources, that other establishments of the Congregation have admitted this new outfit. Since the general assembly has been set for Saturday, December 1, 1973, we would be very grateful if you could send me your answer before that date, so that we can inform the families of the result of this step.

On December 14, 1973, the Superior General explained the reasons for her refusal:

I do not ignore any of the arguments invoked, a little everywhere, in favour of the pants: economy or supposed economy [because one calculates less to follow the fashion], comfort - practice - facility... And I understand what they can have of seducing for parents obliged to calculate; but all these reasons will not make me bend...

Some considerations of a disciplinary nature follow, finally aesthetic. Then the Mother resumes her basic argument:

In the same way that we refuse to mix in the teaching and in the education that we want to give to your daughters, because we think that it is impossible to form a girl's intelligence and sensibility in the same way as a boy's intelligence and sensibility, in the same way we refuse to make ourselves accomplices of the currents of decadence that work and undermine our civilization. We want to treat your daughters as girls, we want them to be treated as girls and to dress accordingly as girls. We want to help them to

deepen the sense of values properly feminine to want and to cultivate the virtues more especially entrusted to the woman, which make it more particularly apt to give and maintain the natural life as the supernatural life You would like your daughters to be fully women “fibers of being, and that they like to dress as consjequessoe

For all these disciplinary, aesthetic and moral reasons, we require your daughters to dress in accordance with their feminine nature...

These concrete requirements, which might seem only secondary, were, in Mother’s eyes, like the construction of defensive forts around the work of Christian education and teaching, so carefully put in place by the Congregation during the last twenty years.

As we approach the seventies, which shook the Congregation so strongly, we must look back at the immense work accomplished in this area during the three Generalates that have just been presented. The consultation of the numerous documents that allow us to draw up a sort of balance sheet of this scholastic work is a source of admiration.

Regular meetings were held for teachers by grade level or by subject, for training sessions or for practical exercises, for the sharing of ideas, experiences and reflections. Programs were established for all classes and subjects, and working methods were fixed, not in a peremptory and categorical manner, but with a flexibility that left teachers free to deploy their own genius within a framework designed to encourage the awakening of the mind.

The reflection focused on Christian doctrine and its “not decorative but effective” primacy (Constitutions, Article

260) in the hierarchy of subjects. In 1956, a session recalled the purpose of this course:

It is important to understand that this is the reflection of someone who has faith on the various mysteries of the faith, contained in the texts of Scripture and in the texts of the ordinary and extraordinary magisterium.

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This is a reflection that must give rise to prayer, which is already requested by prayer and which must orientate life.

She outlined the various mysteries of the faith that were to be transmitted, dividing them into a program adapted to the last four years of the school cycle:

Practically, we have distributed the material of this course in four years:

- God Trinity. God the creator. Creation. Original sin. (Over two years)
- Sin. Grace. Redemption.
- The Incarnation. The Virgin Mary.

For each of these milestones, she proposed a set of readings:

To study: God Trinity - God the Creator - creation - the sin origin), we will use :

- The meaning of God, by Cardinal Suhard.

- Genesis, chapters l, n, m, and Le petit catéchisme des origines du monde by Cardinal Journet.
- Cardinal Journet's retreats: God and the Trinity.
- Knowledge and unknowledge of God, by Cardinal Journet, Connaître Dieu by Father Nicolas, Les Anges by Father Régamey...

It established an elementary bibliography to help the laity reflect on the truths of the faith. But the Congregation did not limit itself to rethinking the curriculum of the large classes. It looked carefully at the awakening of the faith in very young children, and for the elementary grades as well, established a program of astonishing precision.

A Castelnau session proposed the following breakdown:

For the kindergarten, eleventh and twelfth grades, regular teaching but of indefinite duration, depending on the attention of the children.

- First initiation to the Christian mysteries.
- First notions of God Almighty, God Creator through love, God Savior through love.

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- In return: attitude of creatures: humility, trust, response to God's love, availability.
- First notions of real presence.

On the occasion of the liturgy, present some aspects of the mysteries of the faith:

- Christmas: Mary, Mother of God, Immaculate Conception: first notion of sin which is a refusal to obey God; Jesus, the son of God made man, comes to save us.

- Easter: Jesus, the son of God made man, dies on the cross and rises again to save us.

- Old Testament: Moses and Samuel, models of obedience to God.

The Sisters then turned their attention to the ninth and tenth grades.

The teaching is more specific - three hours per week. It presents the development of the great truths already touched.

- First introduction to the sacraments: meaning of sin and God's mercy; first study of the Mass; introduction to the missal and liturgical life.

- Preparation for first confession, first communion.

- Christmas: holy history: preparation for the coming of the Messiah Savior. Abraham, Moses, the prophets, Saint John the Baptist.

It is not possible to list the programs for each class. But each one has been treated with equal care. A bibliography, both for the teacher and the student, is indicated. Suggestions for further study are given.

This very concrete work on the realization of the programs is coupled with a whole pedagogical reflection on the way in which it is possible to make the truths of faith penetrate the intelligence of children. For example, a session in Aix evokes

the place of prayer in Christian formation. The title of the conference is "How do our religious talks prepare for prayer?" It is, of course, about religious talks in very small classes. In the account we find

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of this meeting not only general reflections:

Prayer is born of faith, and faith is awakened by teaching.

The quality of our talks is therefore of great importance for the life of prayer of our children. In order for prayer to become a personal act, even for the little one, the talk must prepare and encourage this encounter with God, and it must elicit a response of love.

but also practical indications:

The time of prayer will be after the talk or during the talk, and sometimes the child will even pray on his own during the day. In order to make the children pray, we must first pray ourselves. Children are very sensitive to this. When they see us praying, they sense that prayer cannot be without recollection. 11 will learn, by seeing us, that to pray is to meditate. We must teach them the meaning of dignified dress, of slow movements, of respectful behavior. We must pay attention to the value of the silence we want: not a silence imposed on the outside, but a silence full of meditation.

The subject matter includes not only prayer, dress and silence, religious gestures, but also the use of religious images, singing, and the attitude to be displayed during ceremonies.

It is impossible to cite all the sessions held on this simple subject of the teaching of Christian doctrine in the early grades during the twenty years of which we speak. The variety with which the question was approached and the quality of the interventions are astonishing. They remind us how to avoid moralism, how to adapt to little children a revealed message that should not be transformed, diminished or belittled under the pretext that it is addressed to children. The sessions evoke the preliminary work that the teachers have to do, and protest against the idea that they will always know enough to address the little ones... ^

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Was Christian doctrine, because of the voluntary primacy given to it, given special prominence in the meetings to the detriment of other subjects? The records show that this was not the case. All subjects were addressed, not once but several times, in equally varied and rich ways. The progressive learning of grammar or arithmetic from the eleventh grade to the sixth grade was, for example, studied in August 1956, reviewed in August 1962, and again in September 1970. A synthesis of the work of the primary school teachers on the subject of reading was proposed to the Sisters in Tarbes on December 14, 1967, then in Aix on January 11, 1968. The same subject was treated in Toulouse on October 24, 1970 and in Aix-en-Provence on Saturday, November 7 of the same year. A study on the learning of French in kindergarten and preparatory classes was carried out on October 25, 1969 in Toulouse and on November 15, 1969 in Aix. Meetings were held with the teachers of seventh and eighth grades to discuss the question of dictation, French and drawing, on February 6, 1971 at l'Annonciation and on February 13, 1971 in Marseille.

A great number of documents, copied with the means of the time, have not been dated; their typography nevertheless links them without possible error to these same years. One finds, for example, a summary of the talk given by Sister Sainte-Foy in Tarbes on the sciences of observation, a talk which had been preceded by a questionnaire addressed to the teachers of the middle school, elementary school and preparatory school. The questions asked show both the concern for precision and the desire to integrate the study of these sciences into a much broader formation of the mind:

Which science textbook do you have? Do you think it delivers on its promise of developing a child's sense of observation? What teaching aids does it use? Does your book orient children to the human problems posed by science?

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How does it do that? Or does it present an accumulation of erudite and disembodied data?

The Sisters also worked together on the subject of school books. An intervention by Sister Raymond-Marie initiated a reflection on the book which is only an instrument that must be completed. In the field of science, we need a book that encourages observation. Let the practical exercises proposed lead to observation. Every science book carries an ideology. Put all observations in their place in nature. To respect the hierarchy of beings. Not to have only a biological mechanism.

One can still find, by consulting the enormous documentation provided by the minutes of these meetings, a presentation of the reading method set up by the

Congregation based on the experiences proposed by Maria Montessori. An intervention by Sister Elisabeth-Marie Blanchot shows the concern of the Sisters to take advantage of all the experiences favorable to the setting up of a Catholic education perfectly adapted to the children.

After several years of testing and research, she explains, we adopted the silent dictation method, a method advocated in France by Maria Montessori, who was herself inspired by Maria Montessori's methods. This one starts from a very simple observation: immobility is painful to the child, it blocks his intelligence and produces fatigue. Provided with a material that forces him to move each time he makes a mental effort, the child calms down and collects himself and his progress becomes rapid. Maria Montessori appeals to the child's muscular memory as much as to his visual and auditory memory: it begins by having him follow the line of a letter with his finger, repeating the meaning it represents. The letter is cut out of sandpaper. Every day, she repeats the exercise, adding one or two more letters as the child has retained the previous ones. This method is neither global nor syllabic, it starts from the pure sound of the letters and all the first letters are added.

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words learned, about 40, are phonetically spelled words.

For the teaching of French, it was necessary to modify, to adapt the method of Maria Montessori. French spelling is only semi-phonetic, it takes into account the etymology of the words, this contributes to give the child the impression that spelling is fanciful, bristling with really discouraging

difficulties. M^{me} Lubienska therefore undertook to classify the words in order to give them successively to the child.

She starts with the image of a concrete object: a bone, a bag, and then helps the child to hear the pure sounds and to find them in a box that she puts at his disposal and that contains the mobile letters. The child handles the letters, goes from the box to its place; the mental activity is joined to the muscular activity. The child composes the word, he writes with the help of mobile letters. He does not know how to read again...

He must be left to mature in peace. One day he realizes that he can read. From then on, his progress was rapid. He moves forward with joy and confidence. What are the advantages of this method? It meets a certain number of requirements: to open our children to a true culture. It is not a pile of knowledge but an awakening of the intelligence. The child discovers what reading is.

The method promotes an educational climate: if a whole class spells, what are we educating in the child? A good mechanism. If in another class everyone has their own reading game, tries to read, the method is already better. But if in a third class, each child moves like in a ballet, comes and goes in the class, quietly, attentively, respecting the work of others and doing an adapted and progressive work, the method is certainly superior.

This is followed by a very long presentation that details the advantages of the method with great precision. It seems that nothing was left to chance in terms of what could or could not contribute to the awakening of the children's intelligence.

This search for a true formation of the mind, far from any mechanism, is found in the choice of programs for the major classes: literature, history, science, Latin, Greek, everything

The Generalate of Mother Anne-Marie 231

It would be necessary to quote everything about this extraordinary work carried out by the Congregation from 1954 to 1974 to completely rethink its programs, its teaching methods, its way of working: in a word, the whole organization of a “renewed Christian school”. Was there at that time, in France, a single teaching congregation that could present to the historian interested in it such a sum of work? But also, in what Congregation could one find at the origin of a movement of this magnitude personalities as strong and creative as those of Mother Hélène Jamet and Father Calmel, whose innovative intuition was followed with such ardor? The work accomplished by the Sisters during the three generalates of Mother Marie-Angélique, Mother Marie-Rose and Mother Anne-Marie made the Congregation of the Dominican Teaching Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus of Toulouse at that time a model of a Catholic teaching institution.

This is why the bishops of the dioceses where the Holy Name of Jesus was established were at first surprised and then annoyed by its positions, so clearly defined and so little in conformity with the general movement in the Church in the pastoral and liturgical domain. While the Congregation was appreciated for its teaching work, its increasingly marked opposition to episcopal directives set up before the bishops an institution that carried weight with public opinion.

Inevitably, these tensions were found within its own members. The unity of the Sisters of the Congregation around the question of teaching was practically perfect:

later documents will prove it. On the other hand, the question of dependence on diocesan directives was a subject of discord.

That is why, on November 17, 1971, Mother Anne-Marie sent a consultation to all the Sisters on the liturgy, the catechism and Catholic Action, in order to clarify the situation. The

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December 20, 1971, she asked Rome to

give up in

sending an apostolic visitor.

A new stage in the history of the Congregation began, a painful and complex one.

3 rd PART 1971-1974:

From tension to rupture

Introduction

The period which is now open to our study contrasts with the very positive assessment which the documents allow us to draw about the teaching work of the Congregation during the twenty years from 1954 to 1974. While the unity of teaching seemed to have forged an extraordinary strength among the members, within a few short years this flourishing and renowned Congregation experienced such dissension that it broke up.

The religious context of this period, which we will call the “post-council” period, already constitutes a first explanation for the shaking that the Congregation underwent. The shaking was not unique to the Congregation: the religious and civil correspondence of those years often reflects the alarmed echoes of those who were in positions of responsibility in their Orders. What seems to have struck them most was the sort of denial of the whole supernatural aspect of religious life. An echo of this reflection can be found, for example, in M. Maritain’s exchanges with Dom Porion, procurator in Rome of the Carthusian Order. Dear Mr. Maritain,” writes Dom Porion, “I am very grateful to you (...)

I commend to your prayers our next General Chapter. In the landslide that is shaking all the structures of the Church, our Order has so far not moved. But it is difficult for it not to feel the consequences. What concerns me most at the moment are the efforts of the ecclesiastical body to throw up the eremitic, ascetic and contemplative element of the Christian tradition.

In the past, pontiffs could be saints, or remain far from it, and so could theologians, but their esteem for the cloistered life and its application to eternal realities did not vary: we have lived nine centuries of the Church's faith - we are an act of the Church's faith. If the change that has taken place in this regard is confirmed, it is difficult for it not to be fatal to the Orders of monks, or of cloistered and praying nuns.

I find my Roman interlocutors more or less resigned to this evolution. What urges the clergy today is the urgency of opening the Church to the values of the world, of showing in its name "an authentic willingness to welcome" the century and its marvelous progress (there is something authentic and just in this wish, but also an accent of vulgarity and silliness so profound that one cannot formulate it without irony). On the other hand, in the very fact of our growing isolation, we recognize a feature of our vocation and we take it as a grace, trying to be more faithful to it.

Thanking you again, I beg you to believe, dear Mr. Maritain, in my respectful sentiments.

In Our Lord,

J. Baptiste M. Porion, o. cart. To which Jacques Maritain replied:

Toulouse, May 16, 1965 Thank you so much for your kind letter, my dear Father and friend. (...) I was very moved by what you wrote to me about your next General Chapter. It seems to me very significant from the point of view of the philosophy of history, that at the same time that at the Council, the Holy Spirit is proclaiming (in language that is, in my opinion, too full of rhetoric) changes in attitude that represent an immense progress (and that have been much too long in coming), - at the same time a hurricane of

stupidity and abjection of extraordinary and apparently irresistible power is blowing all around on the vast expanse of the Catholic and especially the ecclesiastical world. This crisis seems to me to be one of the most serious that the Church has known. In my eyes, it has an eschatological character and seems to announce large apostasies. (...) What we see today is

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cgs pr eter in ecstasy before the world, these cat o ics,
moans of love and

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And if they still call themselves Christians, it is because, according to them, it is through Christianity, duly terrestrialized, that we can finally reach "the blossoming of nature"..... And if they still call themselves Christians, it is because, according to them, it is through Christianity, duly terrestrialized, that we can finally reach "the blossoming of nature". It is thus simultaneously that God and the devil work in human history; and when the Holy Spirit starts to blow, the other immediately produces its hurricanes.

Forgive all this chatter, due no doubt to the exasperation in which I am to see the mass, which was every morning a moment of peace for my poor soul, invaded now by the silliness and the ugliness and the vulgarity of the stupid French translation that our episcopate hastened to approve
1 .

For his part, Father Hugues de Chivré, a Dominican, former prior of the convent of Le Havre, wrote to his superior the

conclusions that the situation of the Church and the Order seemed to make it his duty to draw:

Reverend Father,

Forgive me for taking the liberty of this letter, long matured over many years. There are many of us who feel tragically caught between the responsibilities regarding dozens of Dominican vocations, and the helplessness in which the present state of Dominican religious life in ■ its convents and the inertia of the Order to go upstream.

These young people are looking for a sign of hope around them, especially since they are determined to refuse any diminution of their liturgical and monastic duties.

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Breakup or loyalty

their high ideal, heroically take the step, without daring to entrust their vocation to religious who have never wanked; or, for the honor of the Order, without any rebellion, they take the plunge by taking formation initiatives that honor the Order in spite of it, using its silence as a tacit and secret approval, the last guarantee of maintaining a link, however tenuous, that keeps them belonging to the Order, doing

everything to preserve the spirit of the Blessed Father, in spite of the avenues to which they are exposed by their brothers 2 ...

These two examples, chosen among many similar ones, present the confusing context of that time.

But to this general context, elements specific to the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus were added, so that, like the other institutes, it was caught up in the upheavals of the post-council period, but nevertheless wrote a very personal page in its history.

Let us first recall the chronology of the events we wish to look at in order to understand how, in this Congregation united around its Superior General, fairly minor internal divergences gave rise to these growing tensions and led to a rupture.

îmuniquées à la Congrégation du Sain

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Chronology of events

The events to which the situation we wish to speak of refers date from the years 1971-1975. On March 1, 1973, in fact, the Prioress General of the Congregation of the Dominican Teaching Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus, whose motherhouse is in Toulouse, France, presented to the Apostolic Signatura a recourse against the prescription of November 7, 1972 of the Sacred Congregation of Religious, a prescription confirmed by the same Congregation on February 13, 1973. She demanded that justice be done to her institute against the infringements of the law of the Congregations that Father Van den Brceck, the apostolic

visitor, had perpetrated during his apostolic visit to the institute in 1971 and 1972.

In a rather neutral way, the lawyer who defended the cause of the Sisters before the Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura on June 26, 1973, defined the origin of the conflict as follows

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"official as well as private. It has

Jre general" w" picccc j lacks OR COUt: trouble to recopy each of his own letters before d s, and indicated each time the date of the sending. This is a real historical work on this period thanks to first hand information.

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It is a Congregation of pontifical right, affiliated to the first Order of Dominicans, with twenty houses in ten dioceses, 170 nuns, 22 schools and 200 students. It is an Institute worthy of praise as far as religious life and apostolic activity are concerned, but in the past there were differences of opinion on some points. That is why the Holy See sent an apostolic visitor in 1954. At the General Chapter of that year, a new Prioress General was elected and a religious assistant was appointed.

But since the 1967 General Chapter, discussions have begun again, either between the government of the Congregation and some bishops concerning the teaching of the catechism, the mixed schools and the new forms of

apostolate; or between the nuns themselves concerning the missal used, communion in the hand, the method of education....

The majority of the nuns, including the Mother General, were fundamentalists or traditionalists; the minority, moderate or progressive, wanted various reforms according to the dynamic principle and directives of Vatican II, of the episcopal conference of bishops.

The diversity of opinions did not concern the essential points of the Rule and Constitutions, but it did create a worrying division in the Institute. Therefore, on November 17, 1971, the Prioress General, in agreement with her Council, sent a circular letter to all the nuns, explaining the reasons for her choices on the points discussed, so that each one could examine them and state her opinion in conscience. The results of the consultation were to serve for the discussions and resolutions to be taken at the 1973 General Chapter.

The Mother General requests an apostolic visit

It is necessary here to quote the entire letter of Mother Anne-Marie, written on November 17, 1971 and very long, in order to understand well what were the points of contention between the Sisters:

The time has come for all of us to have the courage to come out of the silence, to express ourselves faithfully and to make the decisions that are necessary. The Congregation is divided, it carries

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In itself the present cross of the Church, it knows divisions and internal dissensions. As long as this suffering only appeared to me as one of the forms of the cross planted in

the heart of our lives as consecrated women, I thought it preferable not to dwell on it but to see to it that each one be helped to come out of herself and her personal difficulties to join Jesus Christ crucified. I relied on the sense and desire of obedience in each one to continue to walk and lead the Congregation in the direction that I believe is the only one worthy of the Lord.

Since I have perceived that this suffering has become a guilty conscience for some who feel uncomfortable in the Congregation, who accuse us of living on the margins of the Church, of refusing to think, pray and live ecclesially, in their own words; Since I have perceived that obedience to the Congregation is impossible for some who look elsewhere, that is, outside the Congregation, for their reason to be, to think and to act, I have thought it necessary to allow all those who have a bad conscience and who, as a result, refuse the fundamental choices and orientations of the Congregation, to live in communities where they can lead an integral teaching religious life, but in accordance with what they consider to be fidelity to the Church. We all want to be faithful to the Church, we all want to be daughters of the Church, to feel and live with the Church, this is the first fundamental certainty that we must have with regard to one another; but this fidelity, this obedience to the Church, we do not understand in the same way. For some, it is, in their own words, “a response to all the current challenges of the modern world”, whether or not transmitted by the hierarchy. For us, it is fidelity, not static but firm, to the teaching and tradition of the Church, whose supreme leader is the supreme interpreter.

With regard to the liturgy of the Mass and the Office, some of us, open to and aware of the progress of ecumenism, “accept all possible openings” in this sense; others, more numerous, simply want to pray “with the Church of today”, like the

others, following the texts proposed and preferably in their daily language, while a small number of us who feel

We refuse to accept the weakening of the meaning of the texts and the danger of a certain Protestantization in many translations. We remain faithful to the Roman canon and stick to the language and the traditional texts of the Church, not out of attachment to Latin itself but because it conveys the deposit of the faith more securely, out of fidelity, therefore, to the faith of our baptism and because we wish to live and die as Roman Catholics - not out of fear of what is new - but out of fear of betraying our faith.

As far as the catechism and the teaching of doctrine are concerned, some of them, sensitized and distressed by the observation of the deChristianization of the hearts, minds and lives of the children entrusted to them, accept the new methods and manuals, while making a point of completing them, because they are proposed by the hierarchy and because they find them better adapted to the environment they have to evangelize; For us, just as sensitive to the distress of souls, or so we hope, we refuse them because we believe that the child of the 21st century is as capable of receiving God and his integral message as the child of previous centuries; we try, however, to better adapt our teaching to the children of 1971 and to reach their lives, but we want to start from God who has revealed himself and is revealing himself, and not from the concrete existential.

Because we see the deviations of the different movements of Catholic Action, and knowing from the Second Vatican Council itself that they are not the only possible forms of the apostolate of the laity in the Church, we refuse them for the love of the souls of our children, while others think that their presence within these movements can be a “Gospel presence”, “a question asked”, a brake on the current trend,

and they make it their duty to be present and active. More absolute without being systematic is our refusal, because we think that to accept to enter a certain current is to become an accomplice and to pact with error.

As far as the Christian school is concerned, some are surprised or indignant that we do not accept the current statutes of national Catholic teaching... That our internal regulations make no reference to the diocesan and national directives of Catholic education. Do they see the

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dangers that threaten us? In fidelity to our vocation and to our responsibility as religious teachers, we want to defend the Catholic school against enemies from within and without. It is an obvious fact that many priests and even some bishops do not believe in the *raison d'être* or the proper character of Catholic education. Are we going to betray our mission by blind obedience to directives that cannot be imperative? Some also find us timid and not very adult in refusing co-education and association contracts; but if we refuse co-education, it is because we are convinced that one does not nourish an intelligence, that one does not raise a heart, that one does not form the will of a young boy or a young girl in the same way, even in 1971. And we know very well that the contract of association leads straight to integration, that is to say, to nationalization, albeit gradually.

Our resistance to the national APELs has the same cause and that is why, almost everywhere, it is impossible for us to insert ourselves in the diocesan pastoral ministry. This withdrawal seems scandalous to many, but it is only “in order to please God” that we accept not to please the world. Finally, concerning the recognition and respect of the nature

and dignity of women, our points of view also differ; some, for example, finding pants more correct than the miniskirt - which is profoundly indecent, are tempted to give in to fashion under the pretext of decency; whereas we, who see in the wearing of pants for girls a deviation from the sense of feminine nature, are intransigent even on this point, even if it means appearing retrograde and small-minded.

I know how scandalous many of you find this choice, this bias to refuse everything that is being done, everything that is in the air right now.

It seems pride of spirit, self-assurance, contempt for others... Our choices do not allow us to judge others in their intentions, and every time we do so we are wrong. But they allow us to remain faithful to the Tradition of the Church, to better serve the Lord, the Church and the children.

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In order to safeguard the unity of the Congregation and the freedom of conscience of each one, it seems to us that at present the only way to do this is to allow those who are troubled or even revolted by the choices of the Congregation, those who feel on the bangs and in hiding from the Congregation, to meet in a few houses with prioresses who share their choice, in a bond of obedience with the Mother General and also in fraternal union with all their sisters. Only your response will dictate what happens next.

What is certain, what no one has the right to question, is that all of us have the desire to live our religious consecration in its entirety, to be faithful to our vows and our constitutions, in a common life and in a common prayer. We also have in common the same love for children and a

sense of the work to be done with them. It is up to us, therefore, to allow all of us to realize this desire in the way that seems to each of us to be faithful to the Gospel and to the Church.

For me, my choice is made. I can only deny it through cowardice or be faithful to it with the grace of God. However, not wanting to violate consciences at any cost, I ask you the following question:

Do you trust the Congregation and are you willing to obey its legitimate superiors?

Or do you have a bad conscience regarding the orientations and directives received so far from the Congregation and prefer, in obedience, to form a separate group in the Congregation?

I count on the loyalty of each one to give a personal answer, written and signed, to the Mother General, before January 1972.

The result of this consultation, which was addressed to 172 Sisters, of whom 171 gave an answer, was as follows

. 91 Sisters said they were in perfect agreement on all the points stated by the Mother General;

. 59 declared that they trusted their superior and were ready to obey, although they did not agree on all points;

. 19 said they had a guilty conscience;

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- 2 did not vote;
- and one did not answer.

Of those who disagreed, 10 accepted the possibility of forming a separate group in obedience; 11 Sisters refused the proposal.

The responses then specified the points of divergence; in order of proportion, first came the question of the liturgy for which 67 Sisters expressed their disagreement; then that of insertion in the diocesan pastoral ministry for which 42 Sisters expressed their disagreement; on the subject of Catholic Childhood Action; 36; doctrinal teaching: 29; national APELs; 25; the statutes of Catholic teaching; 23; the wearing of pants: 12; co-education: 2; contracts of association: none.

An apostolic visitor is appointed

This consultation was made possible by Father Marie-Joseph Nicolas, religious assistant of the Congregation since the canonical visitation in 1954. In a letter addressed to all the Sisters, he took responsibility for it and, in view of the concern that such an operation had aroused, he emphasized “the recognition of a certain pluralism within the Congregation”, even though, he explained, the “options of the Mother General were not her own”.

Mother General,” he wrote on December 20, 1971, “knows very well, and you all know it too, that while I respect the courage and sincerity of her options, I have not made them my own in their radicality. I believe that errors and excesses can be avoided without withdrawing from the general movement of the Church today, and even by entering into it frankly, without giving in to everything that is done and said in it.

The Mother General, however, had shown me the letter that defined them and expressed their spirit. I take full responsibility for the publication of this text. I would never have allowed it if I had seen it as a position of disobedience and

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of revolt. But I took from the serverly what was the very foundation of his letter; namely, that you all have in common the same fidelity and obedience to the “E^ase

In spite of this letter, which was meant to be reassuring, the concern remained so strong that Mother Anne-Marie and her council, supported in their efforts by Father Nicolas, decided to have recourse to Rome

On January 21, 1972, the Sacred Congregation for Religious appointed an Apostolic Visitor, Fr. Sacred Congregation of Religious appointed an apostolic visitor, Fr. Van den Brteck, of the Premonstratensian Order,

to make an: investigation and transmit the result of scholar on the institute named: above, granting him the necessary and opportune powers to properly carry out the mandate entrusted to him.

The Father Visitor was then to submit to the Sacred Congregation of Religious his report on

of the houses/persons and of the economic administration of the institute, at the same time as he [would] give his opinion on the means which he [would] have judged suitable before the Lord to promote the concord of minds and religious discipline.

This visit caused the delay of the Chapter of Election, normally set for July 1973, while awaiting the conclusions of the Visitor; but a letter from Father Van den Brceek had taken care to specify that the powers of the Mother General were therefore extended until the next Chapter. No doubt there had been questions on the subject, for he writes:

I hasten to point out to you what I had already said, if I am not mistaken, to the Most Reverend Mother General. The apostolic visit that I am presently making to your Congregation in no way suspends the authority of the Most Reverend Mother General. By this answer, it is therefore evident that the powers of the Mother General are not suspended at all, as long as the Holy See or I myself do not indicate otherwise.

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strange first visitor's report

A first report seems to have been sent by the Father Visitor to the Sacred Congregation of Religious, perhaps in May 1972. We must say "perhaps", because this report was never communicated to the Sisters. But two documents mention it. The secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Religious, the future Cardinal Paul Augustin Mayer, announced to the Visitor on July 28, 1972, that the Sacred Congregation had taken note with great interest of the information on the present state of the institute and, all things considered, [thought] not to close the visit before the next General Chapter which should be celebrated in 1973.

The second document is stranger. It is not signed. It is dated Grasse, April 30, 1973. It is typewritten and seems to be the recension of the documents of first hand consulted by

the lawyer we have already spoken about. It explicitly mentions the report of Father Van den Broeck, to which it attributes thirteen pages and which it dates from June 23, 1972, specifying that the last visit of the Father was made to the house in Bordeaux on June 18. The precision of the details leaves no doubt about the quality of the source. The document proceeds to the analysis of the report. It is written in the form of notes:

Report by Father Van den Boeck: 13 pages, dated June 23, 1972

- Current state of the Congregation: numbers, houses...
- 1954: Apostolic visit of Father Paul Philippe ended with "the deposition of Mother Hélène and Father Calmel, religious assistant". (Two errors)
- The visitor has seen each and every one of the nuns (inaccurate:
13 did not see it).
- Information obtained from the nuns: two groups: fundamentalists and moderates.
- 91 fundamentalists (the youngest);
- 59 moderates who value others and want to keep their general mother (average age: 70);
- 19 are opposed to the general mother.

The bishops: in general, [reproach] the lack of collaboration in the overall pastoral ministry. The visiting father saw Bishop Guyot, Donze, Fréteillières, Tourelle.

- Have written: Mgr Guyot, de Provenchères, Fréteillières, Bar
- Nothing: Mgr Etchegaray, Tort, Soullier.
- The information was carried by Dominican fathers, themselves pushed by progressive Sisters.
- Bishop Guyot: would not be opposed to removing the passive voice from Mother General.
- Bishop Tourelle: deplores the fundamentalist positions of some Sisters, but they are very much appreciated by the children and families.
- Bishop de Provenchères: wrote at the instance of Bishop Guyot.
- Bishop Donze criticizes the lack of collaboration in the area of education.
- Bishop Fréteillières yesterday: Sisters at the head of fundamentalism in the diocese, teaching moralising according to the old practice of a narrow morality.
- Bishop Barthe: very opposed to the methods of the Sisters in his diocese.

Conclusions and proposals: three negative proposals:

- Grouping the houses by trend would lead to a split and a divided general council.
- Removing the passive voice from Mother Simoulin would not lead to a fair solution and would provoke a revolt. "She doesn't deserve such blame. "
- It does not seem appropriate for the Holy See to pronounce itself by decree on the errors or failures of the

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The issue at stake is primarily liturgy and Catholic teaching.

11 It would be awkward for the Sacred Congregation to take a position in the present circumstances on points that may be open to discussion.

- What it recommends: a decree:
- Invites the religious to good understanding and sincere collaboration with the Ordinaries.
- The next chapter must, before the elections, study and determine the standards to be followed in matters in dispute to which the future general government should be fully subject.
- An assistant would lead the chapter sessions.
- Change the composition of the next chapter in a more representative way. "Such a decree would have the approval of the bishops we met during the visit. "

This amazing document has one final clarification. It reads at the bottom of the page:

"Annotations in the hand of Cardinal Antoniutti": We could not close the visit and the same visitor could preside over the chapter.

Unaware of the content of the Visitor's report and simply informed of the extension of her powers in view of the preparation of the next election chapter, Mother Anne-Marie decided to return to the date of July 1973, initially foreseen

according to the provisions of the constitutions. But, in a letter of August 4, 1972 to Father Van den Boeck, she confided some of her concerns:

And I come to the essential point of my letter. You tell me, Reverend Father, that, according to the powers conferred on you by the Sacred Congregation, you would like to “already consider with us several problems that concern the future General Chapter”. May I express a personal opinion before we even meet? (...) To many Sisters, you have suggested that Rome would ask, among other things, for a change in the composition of the Chapter, wanting a more democratic representation. You suggested,

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It was said everywhere that the mode of election of the Congregation should be reviewed. This policy, which would serve our cause at the present time, because the opposition would be less represented, would be a very serious evil for us, my Reverend Father, because to accept, in the present circumstances, a change in the mode of election and in that of government would be to sell off by the very fact the good that we want to defend (liturgy, Dominican religious life, Christian teaching, habit...) and for which we are ready to give our lives, if God wanted it and made us worthy of it. To accept, in the present circumstances, to touch a single point of our constitutions in this order would be equivalent to wanting the whole edifice to collapse; it would be the breach through which the revolutionary process that we see at work everywhere would quickly infiltrate. As for me, I do not want to be the one whom God could blame for having introduced into the Congregation the system that is losing everything.

Under her signature, Mother Anne-Marie had written a small apposition:

Sister Anne-Marie Simoulin, who, once again, has written what should never be written...

In spite of this letter, the Father Visitor decided to ask the Sisters of the Congregation the question of the composition of the future General Chapter. On August 16, 1972, he sent a consultation with the following wording

For the next chapter, do you want to keep articles 247 and 259 4 of the constitutions as is? You have until October 1 to give your answer...

The articles cited concerned the method of election of delegates.

On October 17, the visitor wrote to the mother general that, following the consultation,

the great majority of the religious wished to maintain the legislation concerning the composition of the next General Chapter.

The numbers of the articles correspond to the version of the constitutions corrected by the 1967 General Chapter.

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But he added:

In view of the considerable number [sic] among whom were interested bishops [sic], I submitted the result of the

consultation to the authorities of the Sacred Congregation of Religious in order to know their will in this matter.

This obscure sentence raised many questions among the Sisters. But they were not given an explanation, as the report written in March 1973 by the Superior General, Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin, indicates:

This sentence was obscure in form and substance.

Indeed:

- The “considerable number” of whom or what?
- Who were these interested bishops?
- Interested in what and in what capacity?
- What kind of opinions did these bishops express?

She continued:

No clarification was given to us with regard to these four questions, which nevertheless also interested us, to clarify our obedience. We must note, in passing, that it had happened to us, in some circumstances, to find ourselves in disagreement with this or that Ordinary, but only on questions where common law and the Second Vatican Council (Christus Dominus) recognized the legitimate autonomy of teaching congregations.

In spite of her reticence, which she did not officially express until five months later, the Superior General wrote to the Sisters on October 20, 1972, communicating the results of the consultation and proposing, according to the wishes of the Visitor, four points for reflection in view of the next General Chapter. The four topics were: liturgy, religious

education, the teaching mission (especially in its relations with the State and with the various national, regional and diocesan commissions of Catholic education), and the possibility of dividing the Sisters according to their tendencies.

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Towards a substantial modification of the constitutions

A week later, Father Van den Boeck, after thanking the Superior for this letter, suggested adding a fifth point of reflection:

The formation of young Sisters. This subject is quite accused by some Sisters.

He added:

In my humble opinion, it seems to me that it is not very effective to leave the study and discussion of these five points to the initiative of individuals or groups. It would be necessary to designate a single person responsible for coordinating the ideas and proposals for each topic. In order to highlight the differences of opinion, it seems to me necessary that a coordinator be indicated for each tendency, that is to say, two for each subject to be studied. The coordinators could, when it seems necessary, take help from the Sisters of their opinion. Each coordinator should therefore be able to highlight, in a clear and condensed way, the opinion of her group on the subject studied. This would not prevent the Sisters from communicating their views, desires and problems immediately to the Chapter Sisters. These ten coordinators (two for each of the five topics), indicated by the General Council and taken from outside

this Council, should be chosen from among the Sisters whose tendencies are very clear and well opposed (I would like, for example, that even Sister Toulouse or those who are in the vanguard be taken as coordinators of a topic) so that the opinions are clearly stated

Such suggestions were clearly contrary to the law of the Constitutions which envisaged the election of delegates in a different way. The Mother General replied to Father that she was opposed to both projects. Not disguising her concern about the proposed changes, she deferred to the Sacred Congregation's response on the composition of the Chapter, "hoping that it would not be based solely on the opinion and desires of a minority. "

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The reply reached the Congregation shortly afterwards. On November 7, 1972, Cardinal Antoniutti named Father Van den Boeck president of the General Chapter, ordering the capitulants not to proceed

to the elections of the Superior General and her officers only after the approval of the Chapter decisions, so that the new General Government can, with full knowledge of the facts, assume its responsibilities for their faithful execution.

In this hypothesis, the newly elected Mother General would have been put on notice to enforce decisions to which she would not necessarily have agreed, since the chapter discussions would have been closed and the conclusions adopted before the office of Superior General was granted.

Such a decision caused the greatest emotion among the Sisters. It called into question the structures, the customs,

the very spirit of the Congregation; the Superior General saw in advance the scope, “a scope that would substantially modify the Rule that [the Sisters] had professed, and which [her] office as Superior [made her] doubly obliged to observe. “On November 29, 1972, she addressed herself to Bishop Mayer, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Religious, to present a real case, calling for a formal response from the Sacred Congregation. This procedure was a claim of right and a recourse to an official act of the legitimate Roman authority. The response from Rome upheld Father Van den Boeck’s decisions,

after careful consideration and taking into account the opinions of the various Ordinaries, and with the sole purpose of helping the Institute to overcome the impasse in which it found itself.

These were the words of Cardinal Mayer.

The recourse to Rome in canonical form

The Mother General and her Council, relying on the advice of Father Dulac, their canonical advisor, decided to send

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to Rome a recourse in canonical form. They met beforehand to define the object of their proceedings. The notes kept by Mother Hélène Jamet following this meeting recall the problems that were raised.

- That of obedience:

The choice is not between obeying and disobeying, but between obeying one law and obeying another law. The Holy See (Paul VI) has provided that one can appeal to a Roman Congregation (Apostolic Signatura) against the decision of a

bishop. It is not disrespectful of a decision of a Congregation to complain to the Apostolic Signatura, since it was Rome that instituted it (Article 106, Constitution Regimini Ecclesiae, C. 1468, September 3, 1967. D.C. no. 1500).

- That of religious life and the vow of obedience:

Reread St. Thomas Aquinas, II-II, q. 104, a. 5, [ad 3]:

“Religious profess obedience to the regular conduct according to which they are subject to their superior; that is why they are bound to obey only those things which can be related to regular conduct. And this obedience is sufficient for salvation. But if they wish to obey in other respects, this belongs to the height of perfection: provided, however, that these things are not against God or against the profession of the Rule, because such obedience would be illicit. “

- That of the purpose of the action:

Normally this appeal suspends the effects of the visit, from the moment that the superior is seized, the superior below must not move. He is divested. Consequences: the chapter must be prepared and must be held in the conditions foreseen by the constitutions.

A recourse against the administrative act rendered by the Sacred Congregation of Religious with regard to the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus was therefore addressed to the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura on March 1, 1973, by the Superior General of the Congregation, Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin. The main administrative act that was challenged was the letter of November 7, 1972 to the Apostolic Visitor, written by the Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation.

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Congregation of religious and entrusted the Visitor with the presidency of the future Chapter of election. On March 11, 1973, the General Chapter was convoked by the Superior for the following months, while two days later the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura acknowledged receipt of the appeal.

Dismayed by this decision, the religious assistant of the Congregation, Father Marie-Joseph Nicolas, resigned, but not without having explained the reasons for his action to the Superior General:

I'm sure you acted according to your conscience. But I have mine too. Until now I have always defended you and helped you in front of the authorities. And I have endorsed many attitudes that I did not advise and that I did not approve of. I did not do it out of weakness but in the name of certain essential things that you defended. This time, I must clearly disassociate myself. Believe that despite the complete failure of my efforts to understand and conciliate, I keep from these few years of shared worries and sorrows, a lot of esteem and affection for you. What can I say about my attachment to your Congregation!

He also addressed the Sisters:

This is the last letter I am writing to you as an assistant to your Congregation. I have just asked the Sacred Congregation of Religious to relieve me of my office, and this resignation has been accepted because of the reasons I gave. (...) I confess to you that I regret not having been able to help you to the end during this visit and in this chapter which was to have ended it. What remains for me, however, from these long years of discreet but real participation in your life and your problems, is a deep fraternal affection for each one of you, in reality very united in your conceptions of

the religious life and in your teaching vocation. The dissensions on the “way of being Church” should not be insurmountable.

11 It should be noted that Father mentioned a certain unanimity in the Congregation despite some differences of opinion.

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In fact, on June 20, 1973, the General Council signed a declaration of unanimity regarding the appeal. It recalled that it had already been unanimous in 1968

to refuse the new catechisms, to preserve the traditional catechism in the teaching houses of the Congregation, to refuse the contract of association, to defend the freedom and the proper character of these schools and to safeguard the religious life of the Sisters.

He placed his “rejection of the ‘overall pastoral ministry’ whenever it distanced the Sisters from the purpose of the Congregation which is teaching” in the prolongation of these previous decisions. Finally, he spoke of his unanimous “rejection of the school map whenever it undermined the proper character of the Congregation (*indolespropria*) as defined by the Constitutions: the teaching and education of girls of which the rejection of co-education is a consequence. He affirmed that he was “divided only in the application of the liturgical reform”.

This unanimity of spirit in the Congregation made the role played by the Visitor inexplicable in the eyes of the sisters. Van den Boeck’s interference in the preparation of the General Chapter and the election of the government of the

Congregation was seen by the sisters as a violation of their constitutions. This thought was taken up by the lawyer for the nuns in his plea to the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura on June 26, 1973: The directives of the Sacred Congregation given to the Apostolic Visitor violate the articles of the Constitutions because they introduce a new system of preparation for the General Chapter; they almost totally deprive the Prioress General, her council, the local prioresses and the delegates of their right to prepare the Chapter and the desiderata, since it is the Apostolic Visitor who does this, by organizing entirely new commissions composed of integralists and progressives; the election of the delegates is also changed.

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The pleading then listed the various articles violated and the modifications made by these measures to the customs of the Congregation.

A document, in the hand of Father Dulac, addressed to the Mother General on May 16, 1973, presents an interesting aspect. It is a kind of plea, an “apology for a recourse”, presented by the legal advisor of the Sisters to their superior before the final step was attempted in Rome. Father Dulac’s observations are divided into three parts, evoking the lawsuit brought by the Sisters:

- Can it be avoided?
- Is there any hope of winning it?
- Even assuming it is lost, are there any advantages to undertaking it?

His answers to these three questions shed light on the Institute’s situation at the time of the trial.

To the first question: “Could we avoid the trial? “He answers yes and adds:

But it should be noted that the government was not entirely free to decide. Indeed: it was a question of advising with a double situation already existing and of which one was not absolutely any more the masters, namely:

- a certain division in the institute, which was remedied by an apostolic visit,
- the disastrous conclusion of this visit (...) inscribed in an act dated November 7, 1972 [which] brings about an enormous upheaval in the constitutions of the Institute, in its spirit, in its present and future life.

Among the upheavals cited, Father Dulac mentions “substantial innovations”:

they concern the very object of the profession, which was made in such and such an institute and according to such and such a Rule. It follows that neither the superior has the right to impose them, nor the subject to accept them.

It is not a question of positive law, but of natural law,

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engaging the virtues of justice and religion which are, in casu, superior to the virtue of obedience.

After having answered very briefly and in a positive way the second question: “Is there a well-founded hope that the recourse will be accepted (and thus that the act of November 7, 1972 will be annulled)?”, Father Dulac looks at the advantages of this recourse, even if it fails. The principal advantage he discerns is that of access to the documents,

until then kept secret, of the apostolic visitation and the bishops' letters. He writes:

We remember that the secretary of the Congregation of Religious had refused this communication to the Mother General who had urgently requested it: a refusal that amounted to deciding the fate of the nuns without their knowledge! And so without them being able to defend themselves with all their weapons. Thus, from now on, we have learned, through the reading of these documents, :

- That Bishop Guyot had long considered the forced resignation of the Reverend Mother General.
- That the Congregation of religious wants to avoid having to pronounce, "officially", on the different points that "divide" the Sisters (admission of the visitor).
- That the visitor and Bishop Guyot, on March 3, 1973, therefore before the notice of appeal had reached the dicastery, had decided on a radical plan:
- or to dismiss, by authority, the entire government,
- or to convene, themselves, a dissident, parallel chapter, composed by them, and whose decisions would then be imposed on the government.

And this discovers the bottom of the initial plan: to try, first by trickery, to make voluntarily accept the projected demolition. Then, if the ruse did not succeed, to resort to the force.

Although it has not been possible to find the originals of these bishops' letters, the testimony of Abbé Dulac, who had them in hand and was able to study them, remains extremely valuable.

The conclusion of this apology for an appeal gives the Sisters' decisions a broader dimension:

before men, that the superiors would not have participated. The appeal might have been lost, but the honor would have been preserved. The Archbishop of Toulouse, Bishop Guyot, whose documents reveal his active participation in the whole affair of the canonical visitation, since he had advised the Sacred Congregation of Religious to choose a visitor who was not too much in the ideas of the Superior General, and since his desire to deprive Mother Anne-Marie of her passive voice at the next Chapter had been noted by the visitor, Bishop Guyot, therefore, clearly manifested his displeasure upon learning of the decision of the General Council and the recourse filed with Rome. He wrote to Mother Anne-Marie on Good Friday 1973:

My mother,

It is with joy that I learned on my return from Rome of the improvement in your health. (...)

Knowing that you will soon be leaving the diocese for Provence in order to complete your recovery, I am writing to you what I would have liked to say to you in person, in all simplicity, if I had had the opportunity to meet you.

I confess that I was surprised and deeply saddened when I learned from the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for Religious of your decision to appeal to the Apostolic Signatura against the Apostolic Visitation, and I can better explain the resignation of Father Nicolas, who had not even been consulted on the matter, even though for years he had given you unselfish and wise assistance, in virtue of the mission entrusted to him by the Holy See.

On this Good Friday, I take the liberty of appealing to your faith and your love of Our Lord to ask you to revise with humility an attitude which has already been manifested in other circumstances for years and which is in danger of causing you to substitute your own judgement for the directives of those who have received mission and authority in the Church.

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For years, in fact, the tension between the Superior General and the Archbishop of Toulouse had been obvious, and Bishop Guyot had even suggested to Mother Anne-Marie that she resign, during a visit he had made to her in the hospital where she was trying to recover from the consequences of a car accident.⁵

On January 11, 1974, the Sacred Dicastery decided that the Chapter would be held under the conditions foreseen by the Constitutions: Reverend Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin was charged with convoking it. This was done on July 7. The mandate of the Superior was thus de facto extended and recognized by the Sacred Dicastery on that date.

On the same date, the Reverend Father Alexandre Decabooter, abbot of Sainte-Marie du Désert, was named religious assistant of the institute as well as apostolic visitor, succeeding both Father Nicolas and Father Van den Brœck, and provided with the faculty “to prepare the general chapter” by “bringing his help to the prioress general”, Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin.

A little later, in June 1974, Father Decabooter was to write to the Sisters:

I was aware, of course, of the divergence of ideas in your Congregation, but I still believed that a General Chapter

with the election of a Prioress General was possible... I confess that I changed my mind when I listened to the communities of Toulon and Grasse... I could not run the risk of attending the election of a prioress who would have shared these ideas...

the Superior General, who was bedridden after this serious accident. While the

When she entered the room, Mother Anne-Marie was crying with laughter: "He came to ask me to resign.... When she entered the room, Mother Anne-Marie was crying with laughter: "He came to ask me to give my resignation... - How can I say that I would hand over the citadel to the enemy? - Am I the enemy?" said the bishop, and he hiccupped with anger. He could not articulate a word more. He went out... "Mother laughed heartily. Her sister, a little less so...

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Statement of the General Mother

In fact, as soon as he took office, Father Decabooter issued a report, the content of which is given in this quotation, and following which the dicastery announced, on May 27, 1974, in a new decree, that a general administrator ad nutum was appointed until the next general chapter to govern the institute with the help of the religious assistant and two councilors. At the same time, the decree pronounced the deposition of the then Superior General, Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin, and deprived her of a passive voice at the next Chapter. We will have to come back to this sanction which struck the Superior through the voice of the Sacred

Congregation. But, for a moment, and in order to understand the course of events, it is useful to pay attention to the paragraph of the decree which followed the statement of the decisions taken. The decree stated in effect that

the new leadership will do everything in its power to maintain the unity of the institute, possibly conceding a legitimate pluralism in homogeneous houses, always safeguarding adherence to the doctrine of the magisterium, obedience to the Holy See and docility to the hierarchy.

The text thus implied that it would be possible for the Sisters who did not share the orientations of the new leadership, that is, the directives given by the diocesan bishops, to remain within the Congregation while maintaining their liturgical preferences, for example, within homogeneous communities.

When one reflects on it, one realizes that the outcome of the canonical visitation had led to the exact inversion of the initial situation that had provoked it: the problems were not resolved since the internal divisions remained - which one agreed could be legitimate - but the minority demands of the so-called “progressive” Sisters had become, through the overthrow of the government, the general orientation of the Congregation, while the traditional positions of the “progressive” Sisters had become the general orientation of the Congregation.

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In fact, the new leadership was entrusted to Mother Marie-Rose Tassy, whose government the Congregation had already experienced from 1961 to 1967. In fact, the new direction was entrusted to Mother Marie-Rose Tassy whose

government the Congregation had already experienced from 1961 to 1967. The links of the administrator with Bishop Guyot were no mystery to anyone, nor was her activity in favor of the reforms of religious life according to the directives of the episcopal hierarchy.

A total reversal of the situation was thus established. And, as a perfect negative of Mother Anne-Marie's letter of November 17, 1971, the text offered the Sisters attached to traditional orientations the possibility of regrouping themselves in homogeneous houses, as Mother Anne-Marie had offered to the Sisters who had a "bad conscience" in 1971. The historian who studies this painful period would therefore expect to see these small traditional structures set up within the Congregation itself. But this did not happen.

The breakup

On the contrary, just one year later, in July 1975, the Sisters separated from the motherhouse in Toulouse. They were led by Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin, the former superior who had been deposed...

How did this Superior General, almost unanimously appreciated, how did the Sisters, most of whom were known for the vigor of their religious life, come to this point of rupture? What were the deep causes of the separation?

The Sisters separated after having demanded for a year the exact application of these measures of the dicastery, and after having repeatedly begged to be allowed to live in the Congregation in fidelity to the vows pronounced on the unabolished constitutions.

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They were based on the excerpt from the report of the Apostolic Visitor from 1972 to 1973, Father Van den Broeck, already quoted:

It does not seem appropriate for the Holy See to pronounce itself by a decree on the errors or failings of fundamentalist nuns, since the matter in dispute concerns primarily the liturgy and Catholic teaching. It would be delicate on the part of the Congregation of Religious to take a position on points that can be questioned and discussed in the present circumstances.

The complaints of the Sisters, or more exactly their requests, at the time of the split, concerned the application of the constitutions in their canonical aspect. They can be summarized in a few precise points:

- . that the celebration of the General Chapter, delayed for twenty-two months, be decided by the dicastery as soon as possible;

- that until then the powers of the administrator are clearly fixed within the limits of her nature (cf. cc. 435 § 3 and 436, which prohibit any innovation and anything that could be harmful);

- that, during this administration and until the General Chapter, the nuns cannot be, by decisions - even provisional - of the administrative power, forced into acts which would harm their acquired rights or would put in danger, in their eyes, serious obligations of their profession.

For this reason, they asked to be grouped in homogeneous houses, which was granted to them at first, if they found a bishop willing to welcome them.

Bishop Pierre-Marie Puech of Carcassonne accepted.

But then the administrator reversed her decision and Bishop Puech wrote to Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin on May 6, 1975: I spoke of your request to Cardinal Guyot, to Bishop Collini, to Bishop de Courrèges, in the spirit in which I had informed you.

I also went to see Mother Marie-Rose, on Perchepinte Street [administrator]. (...) This is why the establishment of ten

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to twenty Sisters in Fanjeaux cannot be considered, contrary to what I had thought at first, as a simple stay of a few months, while waiting for the General Chapter. Inevitably, it was a question of an “implantation” and the project was submitted to Mother Marie-Rose and to the General Council, which did not approve it.

In July 1975, the Sisters concerned regrouped in Fanjeaux, after having exposed their situation in a letter of May 14, 1975 to Mother Marie-Rose:

Bishop Puech, after having given his verbal agreement, communicated to me his refusal, following yours and that of your “council” (...).

Why do you continually refuse us what we propose in order to remain in the Congregation? (...)

Among all the freedoms offered to the Congregation, and God knows there are many, why should we not grant to the Sisters who wish to do so the possibility of gathering in a house to follow, in the most total fidelity to the Constitutions and to the tradition of the Church, our consecrated life as Dominican teaching sisters? If, in order to be recognized,

you have to call this possibility an “experience”, call it an “experience”, but for us it is not an experience. It is not a question, in fact, of trying an experiment or making a trial, but only of continuing what we have always done, that is to say, of practicing what we have promised in a profession that was said to be perpetual and that we want to be so. (...) After having thought, in a moment of discouragement, of leaving the Congregation, we all refuse to do so. We want to continue our life as Dominican teaching nuns of the Holy Name of Jesus and we hold to the words of his eminence Cardinal Antoniutti, speaking to Bishop Dubois in 1964: “The Church does not intend to impose changes on constitutions freely chosen in the profession and which are part of the characteristic physiognomy of the institute itself... The stability of the religious state and the bond contracted must guarantee to whoever embraces a determined type of religious life, the freedom, the right even and the obligation to remain faithful to it until death. “

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What happened next happened quickly. On June 7, 1976, the Sisters concerned received a decree from Rome: they were released from their vows.

In only three years, a legitimately elected superior of a Congregation, appreciated for her worth by the majority of her Sisters and recognized as such by the representative of the Holy See on a canonical visit to the institute, a superior who had asked for this canonical visit in order to offer some of her Sisters an answer to their difficulties, had been placed on the list of those accused, had been condemned and found herself outside her Congregation, relieved of her vows along with those who had followed her in her choices.

Such a reversal of the situation, such an extraordinary turnaround in the order of things, calls for a reflection on the real causes of the rupture and on the modalities with which it

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Main causes of rupture

Introduction

In a letter dated April 21, 1975, addressed to His Excellency Bishop Puech, Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin wrote: “Who or what are we?” She answered in the following way:

Teaching sisters who want to remain consecrated to the Lord,

- in the service of the children of France,
- in our Congregation,
- according to our constitutions,
- according to the traditional catechism,
- according to the traditional liturgy (Mass of St. Pius V and the Dominican Office) in Latin, without sulking in French and without the slightest polemic; by devotion and not in opposition.

This answer exposed the main causes of dissension within the Congregation in that year 1975 which was the year of the break with the mother house.

These causes of breakdown can be reduced to two points:

- the desire to keep the Mass of St. Pius V and the office according to the Dominican rite;
- fidelity to the constitutions on which the Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus had pronounced their vows.

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But these two causes do not present themselves in the same light. The liturgical question was, as the result of the consultation made with the Sisters by Mother Anne-Marie in her letter of November 17, 1971 showed, the point of divergence among the members of the Congregation: 67 Sisters had in fact expressed their disagreement with the traditional orientations of the Superior General in liturgical matters 6 . On the other hand, the question of fidelity to the Constitutions was unanimous in the Congregation. No Sister questioned the 1953 Constitutions. This precise point of attachment to the constitutions already in force, however, called into question the relationship of the government of the Congregation with the diocesan bishops. The history of the Church after the Council is in fact, especially in France, the history of the implementation by the episcopal conferences of the reforms that followed from the new principles established by the Second Vatican Council. The question of the aggiornamento of religious congregations, that of Catholic teaching and especially that of the catechism, and the implementation of the liturgical reform were underpinned by the question of the obedience due or not to the declarations of a council that had been intended to be solely pastoral, and to the episcopal conferences that henceforth directed the life of Catholics collegially. The questions of substance were thus coupled with a question of form, more important in reality than it would appear at first glance, on the nature of the authority of the bishops and on the limits of their power, especially with regard to religious congregations.

Throughout the painful events that marked the history of the Congregation from 1971 to 1975, these two topics of discussion became entangled, making the situation even more delicate.

The reading of the documents which allow to follow day after day the stages of the drama which was played during these years shows

6 - Letter quoted

: in full above p. 240.

Main causes of rupture

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From the beginning, there was a misunderstanding between the superior of the Congregation, the Sisters of the Institute and the authorities of the Church, especially the diocesan bishops. While the Sisters sought to clarify the issues raised by the aggiornamento in the Church and especially in their life as Dominican teachers, the bishops tried to take advantage of a difficult situation to modify the mode of government of the Congregation in order to make it fit better into the "overall pastoral care. It does not seem possible to understand the sequence of events other than in reference to this initial misunderstanding, whether voluntary or not, but dramatic in its consequences. For there is no doubt that the intervention of the diocesan bishops, particularly that of Bishop Guyot, influenced the Roman decisions. Several documents have already proven this.

Among the causes of the rupture that led to the separation of a certain number of Sisters from their motherhouse, we must mention both what was the root of the problem among the Sisters, namely the liturgical question, and what formed the subject of the drama: the relations between the bishops and the Superior General of the time.

The question of the Mass The liturgical reform

There can be no question here of writing a history of the new Mass and of the liturgical reform which so many works have presented with competence and precision. But it is necessary only to attempt to enumerate the milestones of this reform which was the object of the real - and almost unique - dissensions within the Congregation. We must attempt to do this not only by examining the stages in the process of modifying the traditional liturgy, but also by noting the way in which these modifications were suggested, proposed, and then imposed, because, on this question more than on any other, the problem of the limits of the authority of the bishops over the religious congregations arose.

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The Liturgical Movement, as we know, was not born of the Second Vatican Council. From the first half of the twentieth century, a real force of pressure to reform the one thousand five hundred year old Roman missal appeared and grew⁷ .

The famous names of this active movement are well known: Dom Odon Casel, Dom Pius Parsch, Dom Lambert Beauduin, Father Paul Doncoeur. Their concern was to obtain a more active participation of the faithful in the mass, but also, for pastoral reasons, to incline the bishops to modify traditional conceptions of the mass, what the Oratorian Father Louis Bouyer called

to get out of the dead ends of post-tridentine theories of sacrifice ⁸ .

The publication of Pope Pius XII's encyclical *Mediator Dei*, despite its great theological clarity, did not put a stop to the zeal of the reformers. And a Pontifical Commission for

Liturgical Reform, whose secretary was Annibale Bugnini, was created in 1948. In its wake, Father Bouyer was able to make known the theses of Dom Casel, which he liked. Some excerpts of the Oratorian Father clearly expose the orientations of the desired liturgical reforms:

The Mass is a thanksgiving to God for all his gifts, which includes in a single perspective the whole of creation and redemption, but which always takes as its starting point the bread and wine, representative of all created things, and whose consumption is the effective occasion of the meal as well as of the celebration attached to it. (...)

The entire Eucharistic celebration is also a memorial. There is a necessary connection between the two parts of the Christian synaxis, between the readings from the Bible and the meal. For the readings lead to the meal. And the readings are essential to the meal, to show us how it is possible to have a good meal.

7 - Didier Bonncterre, "La guerre des missels a déjà eu lieu", in *La messe en question*. Publications du Courrier de Rome, Paris, April 2002, p. 296.

8 - Louis Bouyer, *La vie de ta liturgie*. Cerf, Paris, 1956, passim.

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We must consider it, not as an event of today which is worth its own weight, but as an event which can only be understood by reference to a decisive action accomplished once and for all in the past. This consideration will lead us, in due course, to see that the whole Mass is but one liturgy of the Word, which began by speaking to man, which spoke to him more and more intimately, which finally spoke to his

heart as the Word made flesh, and which now, from the very heart of man, speaks to God the Father through the Spirit.⁹

The aspirations of the liturgical movement were first put into effect with the promulgation of the *motu proprio Rubricarum irritum* of July 25, 1960, which came into force on January 1, 1961. From this time, Dom Adrien Nocent's book, *L'Avenir de la liturgie*, was published, and a historian of the liturgical reform has written the following review:

The book shows the state of work of the shadow reformers at that time. Dom Nocent first of all states the "principle and foundation" of the new cult: "a great variety of celebrations would thus be permitted around the central nucleus always respected and which would be celebrated alone on simple days". The altar should be facing the people, without a tablecloth outside the celebrations, the prayers of preparation should be simplified, the readings multiplied, the universal prayer restored. The offertory, after the Credo recited only on Sundays, is very shortened. The celebrant only raises the oblates in silence. The chalice is placed to the right of the host, the pall is optional, the incensation is quick.

The Lavabo is only performed if the celebrant's hands are dirty, because "this easy and uninteresting symbolism should be avoided. The *Orate fratres* is recited aloud, as is the secret. The canon is stripped of all intercessory prayers, the *Per Christum Dominum nostrum*, fewer signs of the cross, genuflections, the canon recited aloud, even in the vernacular, the *Pater* recited by all; the hands are shaken at *Agnus Dei*, during which the breaking of the host takes place. The breaking of all hosts takes place from the same ordinary bread. Communion under both

Rupture or loyalty.

species, standing and in the hand. Blessings, /te missa est, no more last Gospel, nor prayers of Leo XIII 10 .

On October 22, 1962, the preparatory outline on the reform of the liturgy was presented to the Council Fathers. On December 4, 1963, the Constitution Sacrosanctum Concilium was promulgated after a massive vote of approval of 2151 to 4.

Immediately afterwards, Pope Paul VI issued the motu proprio Sacram Liturgiam for the implementation of the Constitution, and on February 29, 1964 the “Council for the Implementation of the Liturgical Constitution” was created.

This Consilium held, by the will of the Pope, an authority parallel to that of the Congregation of Rites, until then the primary authority in this matter. Little by little, the Consilium was to modify the ritual of the Mass, relying on the texts of the conciliar schema which had allowed the liturgical reform to be evolutionary, free, and democratic.

As an experiment, many tests were allowed, then gradually changed from “just possible” to “normal” and finally became “mandatory”.

For example, on September 26, 1964, the Consilium authorized the optional use of the vernacular, except for the preface and the canon. On that same date, and for the first time, liturgical powers were entrusted to the Episcopal Conferences.

On May 4, 1967, permission was given to say the canon aloud in the vernacular.

Thus, step by step, and smoothly, a new Mass was gradually put in place which was soon to be called the “normative Mass”. This was presented to the bishops gathered in synod on October 14, 1967. But the votes were against this new Mass.

10 - Dom Adrien Nocent, *The Future of the Liturgy*. Éditions Universitaires, 1961, pp. 119 to 171. Recension established by Abbé Bonneterre, ap. cit. p. 301.

1962: opening of the Second Vatican Council (below). Cardinal Garrone will then ask the Congregations to reflect on* the soul of the

“dialogue with the world” (p. 154). In 1966. Paul VI wrote to them: “the principal role in the renewal and adaptation of religious life belongs to the Institutes themselves, acting principally through the General Chapters” (p. 120).

F|*” *

However, if the Sisters adapt to the world as Rome asks, what will become of them? Will they follow the path that other nuns thought they had to follow? Moreover, the surveys on the beliefs of the French in the 1960s are alarming. They encourage skepticism about the benefits of the new “spirit of the Council”.

July 8, 1967: the General Chapter meets to elect a new Superior. It was a surprise: Mother Anne-Marie was chosen by the votes of the capitulars. She did not have the age required by law, so a dispensation was requested and obtained. This election would “suddenly change the evolution of the Congregation. Mother Anne-Marie began by postponing for nine months the date of the Chapter which, according to the Roman directives, should lead to the *aggiornamento* of the religious institute (p. 169).

Who is Mother Anne-Marie? Born Andrée Simoulin, she belonged to a family from the region of Marseille, which had a total of 14 children and gave to God a priest and three nuns.

After a degree in literature, Andrée entered the Congregation in 1949. She was immediately enthusiastic about the reform undertaken by Mother Hélène Jamet (below), to whom she became close.

From July 1967, the new Prioress General organized her government as a fight against what she would later call “the drifts of the conciliar Church” (p. 176). On the question of the “school map”, catechism, the choice of ritual for Mass, and educational work, Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin opted for the traditional Catholic spirit and fidelity to the very elaborate reform of the constitutions, completed in 1953. We see her here, on March 6, 1968, in Tarbes with Bishop Pierre-Marie Théas (at the time bishop of Tarbes and Lourdes) and one of her assistants, Mother Saint-François Assémat.

1971: Father Nicolas, Mother Anne-Marie’s assistant since 1954 (above left), resigned (p. 255). But she received new support, for example from Jean Madiran and Jean Ousset (below). The support of Father Choulot (above right) is also to be mentioned, especially from May 1974, when, relieved of her office by Rome, she was appointed to Saint-Etienne-de-Tulmont. For the village is only a few kilometers from Nègrepelisse, where Father Choulot is parish priest (p. 320).

The former Superior General was appointed to the elementary school of Saint-Etienne-de-Tulmont (above, in the background). But on July 2, 1975, realizing that it had become impossible for her to be faithful to the Constitutions of her congregation, she moved with some Sisters to a property in Fanjeaux (below, view of the surrounding

countryside), near Carcassonne. There, one can visit a house (opposite) in which Saint Dominic once stayed.

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Si;,ÏÏ3?! **"" """". mother WM*.

(d MG) Ci H œU j S and ^ eUX postu ^ antes accompany him to Fanjeaux vcc àù'début des ^ C " deSS ° US ' à la rentrée >975. les classes reprennent avec, au début, des élèves venus principalement du cours Notre-Dame de l'Annonciation, de Toulouse (p. 358).

The press was not insensitive to the installation of these Dominican sisters in Fanjeaux (opposite). The support that Bishop Lefebvre gave them (above, during a profession) attracted

At the same time, the prelate of Ecône became a symbol of the refusal of the new Mass (p. 354).

Archbishop Lefebvre visited the community of Fanjeaux several times, which

Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin of some confident conversations with the former Superior General of the Fathers of the Holy Spirit (opposite, on the occasion of Corpus Christi, in 1978, in Cugnaux).

The Roman authorities sanctioned the Dominican Sisters of Fanjeaux, deciding to no longer consider them nuns.

he R.R. Calmcl, who is very close to the Congregation and has been retired to Brignoles since July 1974, and Archbishop Lefebvre know each other

in Toulon, in 1970). The religious

identical: the Tradition

Catholic.

Forty years later, in 2016, the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesusdc Fanjeaux has two hundred and ten members. It receives its novices at the motherhouse of Cammazou (above) and has sixteen houses, for example the Sainte-Anne course in Kernabat (below), and Saint-Dominic in the United States

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new form of Mass. Pope Paul VI decided to commit his personal authority to the “normative Mass” by proclaiming the Constitution Missale Romanum on April 3, 1969. And on April 6, 1969, the Sacred Congregation of Rites promulgated the new Ordo Missee, which was to come into effect on November 30, 1969.

In four years, therefore, a major liturgical revolution had been achieved.

It should be noted that this new Mass could not call into question the goodness of the Tridentine Mass, known as the Mass of St. Pius V, which the Church had recognized since antiquity and which Pope St. Pius V had protected with the bull Quo Primum. But the ambiguity of the situation arose from the fact that the reigning pope covered with his authority another form of liturgy, the poverty and even harmfulness of which many Catholics denounced, and which the bishops, especially the French, soon presented as the only mass authorized in the Catholic Church. The question of obedience to the pope and the bishops was grafted onto the fundamental question of the ambiguities of the new rite,

creating a situation of confusion and division among many Catholics, especially in the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus.

This liturgical revolution was indeed the main reason for the dissensions among the Sisters in the Congregation.

The Congregation in the face of this liturgical reform

After having initially tried to implement the first suggestions of the liturgical reform in each of the houses of the Congregation, several Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus expressed their desire to be able to still attend Mass celebrated according to the rite of St. Pius V, without any change in rubrics. Without doubting the “validity of the new Ordo Missae promulgated by the Pope”, they expressed doubts about “the validity of many ‘Eucharists’ which, in France, claimed to be based on the new Ordo in order to deviate from it in a scandalous manner”.

On October 11, 1970, Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin, still Superior General, wrote through Father Dulac to Cardinal Gut, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship:

Eminent Lord,

The undersigned, Raymond Dulac, priest of the diocese of Versailles, respectfully presents to Your Eminence the following request on behalf of the Superior General of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus or Dominican Teachers of Toulouse, whose mother house is in Toulouse, Place Perchepinte:

That they may continue to celebrate Holy Mass according to the rite of the Roman Missal of St. Pius V in the chapels of their houses and colleges, when it is a question of “community Masses” and, likewise, when the large number

of students attending Mass are capable of understanding this rite with fruit and desire it.

They ask that the approval given to their request, in conformity with the instruction published in the Acta of December 30, 1965, confirm them in the possession of a peaceful use, from which they have not ceased to derive a great spiritual benefit for themselves and for their students.

The Cardinal responded favorably to this request. But after Mother Anne-Marie's deposition in June 1974, the new government of the Congregation resolutely expressed its preference for the new Mass. The conditions for attending the Tridentine Mass became difficult, if not impossible, in some houses where the chaplain celebrated according to the new rite and where no priest of the traditional rite was nearby. Several Sisters, relying on the authorization given by Cardinal Gut, nevertheless asked to be able to attend the Mass of St. Pius V. On October 20, 1974, the Congregation's Assistant General, Mother Marie-Rose Tassy, relying on the authority of the bishops to whom she recognized the sole competence to give this authorization, decided to present to Rome the requests of these Sisters in favor of the old Ordo Misse, since most of the local Ordinaries were not in favor.

Bishop Bugnini himself wrote a letter to Bishop Collini, bishop of Toulouse, disavowing the inducement given by Cardinal Gut to the Sisters:

I must give some details about an alleged inducement which was granted to the Dominican Teaching Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus whose mother house is in Toulouse. On October 11, 1970, Father Raymond Dulac, a priest of the diocese of Versailles, had addressed to the late Cardinal Gut, in the name of the Superior General, a request to obtain permission to celebrate Mass according to the rite of the

missal of St. Pius V in the chapels of the houses and colleges of this Congregation. Cardinal Benno Gut had already responded

! dITf' 12 ° Ct ° bre 197 °' by writing on the same letter

of the applicant these simple words: *Secundum preces cum benedicüone nostra*, followed by his signature. This act calls for the following remarks:

10 In bienVeil ' ance Paumelle, Cardinal Gut believed that he could thus grant such a concession. But, in fact, this was beyond his own competence, either ordinary or *delegatus* -oir aucune *va* 2 " nel and n eniap 1 é ^* den î' that this act was strictly *personour* 1 en / len a *responsabi lité* of the Congregation for Divine Worship, of which Cardinal Gut was then prefect Le

âncĭ desrèi ** " d ° Cument résulte - en effet, de Hnobserrĭels n 8 SU,V,eS par la CUrie romaine dans ses actes offlc els. papier reserve aux dicastères avec numéro de *pro secrétairennH' 6 ^ ' de préfet ' "ntre-signature du cette r* - h " 3Utre ° ffiClel dC a Con g ré gati°n, sceau de cette Congrégation pour authentifier le document. Finally, the personal style of the words traced on the letter itself of the applicant completed to prove the private character of such a correspondence, devoid of any official value.

3° Assuming that this permission was valid, it ended, in any case, on November 28, 1971, according to the terms of

H - See p. 202.

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the letter of Cardinal Tabera to Cardinal Guyot, Archbishop of Toulouse. Consequently, one cannot invoke the authority of this writing of Cardinal Gut to continue to celebrate the Mass according to the rite of St. Pius V.

On November 16, 1974, Bishop Collini “hastened”, in his own words, “to send Mother Marie-Rose a photocopy of the communiqué published by the plenary assembly of the French episcopate on November 14, 1974, concerning the use of the missal of Saint Pius V”.

This communiqué, issued by the plenary assembly of the episcopate in Lourdes, was written as follows

For some years now, an opinion has emerged that the liturgical reform called for by the Second Vatican Council is not obligatory. In particular, it is said that the use of the old *Ordo Missæ* of Pius V can continue to exist in conjunction with that of Paul VI. The rules laid down on this point by the Roman authority are clear and the will of the bishops of France is that they must be adhered to: the whole of the missal promulgated by Pope Paul VI must replace the missal of Saint Pius V. Exceptions to this rule can only be made for elderly or infirm priests, in private celebrations without the assistance of the faithful, and with the express permission of the bishop. However, some Catholics of good faith are currently being misled by propaganda which aims to make the refusal of the liturgical reform desired by Vatican II a criterion of orthodoxy. They go so far as to cast suspicion on the texts of the Paul VI missal and in particular on the Eucharistic prayers approved by the Holy See, claiming that the content of these texts is not in conformity with the faith or, at the very least, that it is ambiguous and can favor heresy. The bishops of France cannot tolerate such accusations which go against the truth. One cannot at the

same time proclaim one's fidelity to the Holy Father and be the propagator of such calumnies.

The Episcopal Conference of France, in communion with the universal Church gathered around the successor of Peter, hopes that the faithful whose judgment may have been misled will be enlightened by this clarification and will henceforth participate with faith in the Eucharistic sacrifice according to the current rite of the Roman Church.

fmcipiles attises de ruptur

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An interesting remark is in order here: the bishops of France clearly state that the new Mass must replace the tridenrine Mass. The argument given is not a substantive one since the theological question is dismissed as insulting to the pope. The argument given here is an argument from authority: who still attends the tridenrine mass is opposed to the pope.

In spite of this proclamation of the bishops of France, the Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus, attached to the rite of St. Pius V, redeemed themselves to be able to attend it, considering that the intervention against the tridenrine Mass was an abuse of power: My mother," they wrote through Mother Anne-Marie to Mother Mane-Rose, "I have read and reread this communiqué; it has not taught me anything new and does not shake me. My firm desire is to remain in the Congregation, in a house where it will be possible for me to live and die in fidelity to the Mass known - wrongly - as that of St. Pius V, because it was codified by him, which our Holy Father the Pope did not prohibit and which he cannot prohibit. Our bishops do not say this, but they cannot say the contrary, so how can we explain the relentlessness of their hatred against this single me, which

is, however, that of their ordination? I cannot explain it to myself. What is becoming more and more obvious to me is that in France, as in other countries, a national Church is being formed, parallel to that of Rome; now, before being a Catholic of France, I am a daughter of the Roman Catholic Church, and I am a member of a Congregation established in a diocese, but which is also of Roman right. On the subject of the Mass, I have questioned Rome several times without ever receiving an answer (and for good reason: what is, for example, the Mass said in private by our Holy Father the Pope, which our bishops wrongly claim to forbid the Mass of his devotion?) The silence of Rome is for me more eloquent than all the threats and imperatives of our bishops. Rome is voluntarily silent. The only answer that you, Mother, have obtained from Cardinal Knox is that one cannot claim to be faithful to the Mass of St. Pius V because of “my alleged inducement”. Nowhere does it say that it is forbidden. That is enough for me.

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The reasons for the choices

Many works have contributed to a comparative study of the two rites. It is impossible to summarize in a few lines the doctrinal reasons which were at the origin of the choice of the Sisters in favor of the rite of Saint Pius V. However, we can find in their correspondence excerpts which allow us to understand that this choice was essentially based on the customs of the Church.²

Before any other consideration, the Sisters relied on the legitimacy of a tradition that no later law can abolish. The organization of the Church, desired by Christ from the beginning, is based on the communication of Revelation, through an external language, written or oral, which

expresses the conceptual enunciation of the mystery. This Revelation, definitively closed since the death of the last of the apostles, is transmitted by the magisterium of the Church, which can specify the expression of the revealed truths, but cannot exercise itself as such to propose truths which would not be revealed. This magisterium is therefore constant and traditional in the Church: it cannot abolish laws issued in the past. This is the general idea which emerges, for example, from a letter from Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin to Mother Marie-Rose Tassy, dated October 28, 1974:

We are neither heretics nor schismatics by continuing to attend the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass as it has always been celebrated in the Church. The Holy Father himself, in making

12 - We summarize here the essential elements of the argument of the Sisters, who consequently believed that they were irremovable. It was not a question of them denying the Pope sufficient authority to modify a rite. But, at the time, caught up in the whirlwind of events, the Sisters did not always take the time to specify the details of their position. On the other hand, they adopted all the reflections of their canonical advisor, Father Dulac. Dulac's study "La bulle Quo Primum de saint Pie V, introduction, traduction et commentaire", published by the review Itinéraires in the supplement to number 162, dated April 1972.

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the new rite, did not prohibit the old. The fact that the Order has in fact renounced the Dominican Rite does not detract from the privilege it has acquired in itself for all time. It is the law of the Church against which nothing can be done.

The Sisters reproached the new Ordo Missæ first of all for its subjectivity, at least in the celebrations in force in France. They saw in it, in their own words, a danger to their faith.

Each priest, they wrote, celebrates in France “the Eucharist” according to his whim. As a person who is not of my tendency said to us recently, “I attended five masses, I had five different masses”. (...) Such is the drama.

(...) Personally, I accepted for several months to attend the Mass according to the new Ordo, but when I saw the evolution that it was undergoing in France, its betrayal, I returned to the Tridentine Mass.

In fact, the predominance of subjective and personal choices, especially in the lectionary of the Paul VI missal, was a great novelty in the Catholic Church. In the traditional Roman liturgy, the Mass to be celebrated by the priest is, in the vast majority of cases, fixed by the Church: the celebrant bends to this ecclesial choice and conforms to it. Christians attached to the traditional missal were therefore astonished to discover how much subjectivity and personal choice were involved in the Paul VI missal.

In a more profound way, Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin, still Superior General, had summarized in a circular addressed to all the Sisters of the Congregation the doctrinal concerns that these new celebrations aroused in her and in several Sisters. These very precise words have already been quoted. Nevertheless, they must be reread here in order to understand that they really presented the substance of the question:

13 - Cf. p. 242.

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With regard to the liturgy of the Mass and the Office, some [of the Sisters], open to and aware of the progress of ecumenism, “accept all possible openings” in this sense; others, more numerous, simply want to “pray with the Church of today”, like the others, following the texts proposed and preferably in their daily language, while a small number of us, who feel a weakening of the meaning of the texts and the danger of a certain Protestantism in many translations, refuse them, we remain faithful to the Roman canon, and we hold on to the language and the traditional texts of the Church, not out of attachment to Latin for its own sake but because it conveys the deposit of faith more securely, out of fidelity, therefore, to the faith of our baptism and because we wish to live and die as Roman Catholics - not out of fear of the new - but out of fear of betraying our faith.

The following excerpt from a letter of Father Calmel addressed in 1970 to Mother Anne-Marie develops this last point, attributing to the Masses celebrated according to the rite of Paul VI the qualification of “equivocal” Masses;

This is not a change of rubrics as when John XXIII asked us to say the Per Ipsum aloud, or asked the whole congregation to sing the Our Father. The rubric changes under Pius XII, likewise under John XXIII, were seamless. There will always be such minor changes. We do not get hung up on this. These are substantial changes (...) that make the traditional Catholic Mass fall into heresy. This mass was constitutionally inassimilable to heresy, inassimilable because it was constituted on the purest dogma. It is therefore a question, in order to make a unified cult (of all religions), of suppressing this traditional form of the mass, this form which makes it inassimilable to the Lutherans. If this form is destroyed, it does not matter that the Mass remains valid, it

is made to slide towards nullity and it will get there. The changes are substantial:

- by the necessary evolution of the translations in vulgar language and the suppression of the Latin,
- by the multiplicity of badly translated canons,
- by the multiple futuristic cheers.

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- by the incessant mutation of the rites of communion,
- by the concession of total autonomy to the national Churches in a matter where dependence on the Roman Church is obligatory,
- by the change of meaning of the offertory which becomes: the graces after the meal.

It is therefore possible to summarize in three main points the motives that led some Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus to preserve the Tridentine Mass:

- the affirmation of the perennial and therefore traditional character of the teaching of the Catholic Church linked to the very will of its founder;
- the refusal of subjectivity in the liturgical rites which ensure the validity of the sacraments from which grace is derived;
- the desire to reaffirm, through attendance at the sacrifice of the Mass celebrated according to the rite of St. Pius V, the truths of faith defined by the Council of Trent and weakened by the underlying theology in the new Ordo Missa.

Such statements, particularly incisive, seemed excessive to many bishops. Bishop Puech of Carcassonne, in one of his letters of May 6, 1975, spoke to Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin:

It is really unreasonable for you to make the Mass of St. Pius V a reason for discord. Believe me: it is truly the desire of the Church, and therefore of the Lord, that the Mass be celebrated according to the rite revised by Paul VI, in accordance with the wishes of the Council. As a witness to the vote of the Fathers of the first Synod, of which I was a member, I can assure you that this “new” Mass was intended to be what it already is: in fidelity to the perennial doctrine of the Holy Sacrifice, a powerful means of provoking the “active and conscious participation” of the faithful, and thus of giving them greater access to the fruits of the Mass.

That abuses exist, I deplore them more than you do and I protest every time I discover them. That the translations (...) can be improved, is certain. But to believe that the faith is in danger

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because of this new rite, it is to put in doubt the assistance of the Holy Spirit. (...)

Since this is the main reason for your difficulties, allow me to respectfully insist that you put it into perspective and trust the Pope and the bishops on this point.

Such statements did not shake the Sisters who wished to remain faithful to the Tridentine Mass. But the intervention of the diocesan bishops in the discussions prevented most of them from reflecting on the situation created by the

introduction of the new Ordo Misse in the houses of the Congregation. The debate should have been on the level of theology and faith, not on the level of discipline. This misunderstanding did not allow the Sisters to get out of the impasse in which the movement of

aggiornamento in the Church.

The intervention of the bishops was even more notable and had clearer consequences in the question of fidelity to the constitutions, both in the articles that governed the elections to the generalate and in the practical methods to be implemented in order to respect the proper purpose of the institute.

The question of constitutions

The second cause of the rupture was in fact the observance of the constitutions of the Congregation. On this subject, the unanimity of the Sisters was almost perfect. But the defense of the constitutions, especially in what they prescribed for the government of the Congregation, made relations with the diocesan bishops delicate. Their interference in the matter of the canonical visitation provides astonishing proof of this.

The Congregation of the Dominican Teaching Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus was founded in Toulouse in 1800. It had received the decree of praise from the Holy See on May 4, 1870. It was regularly affiliated to the Order of Saint Dominic on December 8, 1885.

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Its constitutions were approved on September 8, 1873. They were modified and, in this new form, approved on November 16, 1903. Adapted to the new Code of Canon Law, they were ratified in 1935. Modified again in 1953, they were approved on September 3, 1953. This reform was the fruit of the collaboration of Father Calmel and Mother Hélène Jamet, then Superior General of the Institute.

In response to the recommendations of Pope Paul VI in the decree *Ecclesia Sancta*, these 1953 Constitutions were revised during the 1967 General Chapter. This revision was only on secondary points, and the Sacred Congregation of Religious made it known that the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus continued to be governed by the 1953 Constitutions. And, in fact, the professed sisters made their religious commitments on the basis of these constitutions.

According to the canon law of the Church, the Sisters were therefore bound to conform to these constitutions, unless a duly convened and regularly held General Chapter had abrogated one or other of their articles.

Let us recall that this discipline of the Church had been reaffirmed in 1964 by Cardinal Antoniutti addressing Bishop Dubois. His words take on their full significance here:

The Church does not intend to impose changes on constitutions freely chosen in the profession and which are part of the characteristic physiognomy of the institute itself...

The stability of the religious state and the contracted bond must guarantee to whoever embraces a certain kind of religious life, the freedom, the right and even the obligation to remain faithful to it until death.

The dispute over the constitutions involved two different areas:

- Chronologically, the first was canonical. A large number of the Sisters questioned the canonical visit made by Father Van den Boeck at the express request of Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin in 1973. They reproached him for having taken

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decisions contrary to the constitutions, especially in the preparations for the General Chapter.

- The second one was about the habits of the institute and its own purpose: the Catholic teaching and education of young girls.

These two motives were intertwined since the canonical visitation carried out by Father Van den Broeck had as its goal “to promote the means proper to religious discipline in the institute and to the concord of souls.

A canonical visit at odds with the law

The visit of Father Van den Broeck has already been mentioned. It caused a real stir among the Sisters, not only because of the extravagant demands of the visitor who demanded conditions of material comfort that shocked them, but much more profoundly because of the way in which he guided the talks: the Sisters, especially those of the community of Grasse, reproached him for words that they judged to be untrue and outrageous for the government of the Congregation. They objected to the practical modifications of their constitutions that he wanted to impose, especially for the next General Chapter. To the

future Cardinal Mayer, Mother Anne-Marie tried to expose her grievances against the Visitor:

We have learned with great emotion of the letter of His Eminence Cardinal Antoniutti dated November 7, 1972. We wish to express here with respectful frankness to your Excellency the feelings that this letter has inspired in us, so that he may report it to the eminent Prefect in the manner that he may consider most opportune.

To say it all in a few words, the orders pronounced in the letter of November 7 would, if they were carried out, bring about an enormous upheaval in the constitutions and the life of our institute: either with regard to its ordinary regime; or with regard to the order and the holding of the next General Chapter.

customs, a spirit that would have an excessive and definitive scope. A scope that would substantially modify the Rule that we have professed and that our office as Superior and Councilor makes us doubly obliged to observe.

Moreover, these precepts, if observed as they are, would amount to such a resignation of the authority of the superiors, to such a disavowal of the proper character of our Congregation, that they would necessarily have the value or take on the aspect of a serious canonical sanction.

We are therefore led to believe that the report of the Reverend Apostolic Visitor, presented by him to the Sacred Congregation of Religious, so seriously distorts the facts or interprets them so falsely that we are forced to question its objectivity and prudence.

We are not producing this conviction *ex integro* today, but it was slowly forming in our minds and in the minds of many Sisters during the visit, based on very precise, concordant

facts, the bundle of which today finds its total clarity in the letter of His Eminence.

As long as we could hope that the powers of the Reverend Father Van den Boeck would remain limited and his personal opinion subject either to verification or even to possible contestation, we made it our duty to keep silent about defects which had sometimes produced more than surprise among the sisters. Today we feel in conscience that we can no longer remain silent. That is why, with sadness, after mature reflection, after taking advice, and in order to fulfill the responsibility included in the office that has been entrusted to us, we submit to Your Excellency in conscience the following sentiments, resolutions and requests:

- we raise against the report of the Apostolic Visitation an exception of fundamental suspicion;

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- we expressly recuse Reverend Father Van den Broeck from any function that would be entrusted to him in the future with regard to our Congregation and especially for the preparation and the presidency of the General Chapter of July 1973;

- we humbly beg the authority of the Holy See to decide to submit the report of the Apostolic Visitation to a new examination, even if it is contradictory, in the manner that seems most opportune.

This letter raised the question of the objectivity of the Visitor. It recalled that the canonical visitation had been requested by the Congregation's own government to resolve specific questions that had nothing to do with the Congregation's mode of government. She reproached the Visitor for having transformed the talks into suspicious

conversations about the legitimate superiors. The Superior General explained that little by little, as the months went by, this conviction had formed in the minds of many Sisters, introducing a serious doubt about the profound motivations of the Visitor and about the external influences that he had received. For this she relied on the reports of their talks with the Visitor Father that some of them had sent to her. Let us quote some of them to better understand the reproaches formulated. These testimonies have the double interest, on the one hand to show what the Sisters, whatever their orientation, considered shocking in the work accomplished by the Apostolic Visitor, but also, even though this was not the intention of the Sisters who were rather indignant about the indiscretion of the Visitor and his critical spirit, to highlight the role played by the bishops of the dioceses in all the difficulties mentioned.

In Toulouse, a Sister was astonished at the criticism of the French episcopate: Father Van den Broeck made a point of obtaining from Cardinal Antoniutti and the Sacred Congregation of Religious the necessary authorizations for all our affairs to be settled directly by our General Chapter. He explained to me that in this way we

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could avoid pressure from the bishops of the dioceses in which we had houses, and these pressures seemed illegitimate to him.

Father Van den Broeck seemed to me to be overstepping the rights and role of an apostolic visitor when he indicated that he thought it would be desirable to democratize the General

Chapter through a much broader participation of the grassroots¹⁴ .

Another Sister noted in the interview the words that shocked her:

- On the subject of bishops, “the question of your Congregation would be very simple if the bishops were not involved. But Rome cannot blame the bishops it has put in place. As for the catechisms, they are neither approved nor disapproved because they were adopted by the collegiality. The French bishops give Rome a lot of trouble, but she can’t do anything against them.”

- About the pope: “There are as many Paul VIs as you want. “

- On a prearranged plan: “There should be a broader representation in the Chapter. Elections could be done differently, as the current prioresses have all been appointed by the Mother General.”

- On the subject of the Mass of St. Pius V: “The Father cannot forbid going to this Mass. In any case, there would only be disobedience from a disciplinary point of view and not an error on the faith.”

- And finally, the Sister notes her astonishment at the Father’s ignorance of the school question in France:] “What are the contracts? What is the 1S school map? “

The visiting father was received by the novice mistress in March 1972. She also gave a report of her interview:

From the beginning of the conversation, the visiting father stated that his visit would be brief - that he had not even thought it useful to see all the Sisters - that he knew from

experience how little one should take into account the words of the women, and especially the

14-20 April 1973, Sister Marie-François Dupouy. 15 - Same date, Sister Marie-Luc Sidos.

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Sisters - that the study of the file had been sufficient for him, and that his conclusions were ready - that, moreover, there was no reason to worry.

The main part of his talk was about the following:

- The agitation is caused by a very small nucleus of Sisters (six or seven, it seemed to him) - and in this regard he spoke with irony of some Sisters and almost with contempt of others. Everything must be settled by the Congregation itself in chapter. Above all, it is necessary to prevent the matter from going outside the domain of the Sacred Congregation of religious. The report that the Mother General sent in view of this visit shows the fervor, the regularity, the apostolic impulse of the Sisters - and their near unanimity in safeguarding the essential values of religious life.

- This was followed by high praise for the Mother General for whom he expressed great esteem, wishing that she be reelected at the next Chapter. His only reservation was that she had not been firm enough: she had to give clear and imperative prescriptions and that the Sisters who did not want to follow them should leave the Congregation - which, moreover, they would have no difficulty in finding institutes that offered them what they wanted.

- For the General Chapter, Father discreetly put forward the idea that perhaps we could broaden the participation of the

Sisters, ask for the assistance, the advice of an expert, convene it in a more democratic way.

> He deplored the fact that some bishops had made reports to Rome, no doubt at the request of the Sisters, because Rome could not ignore them: Rome will not publicly disown bishops. In this regard, he spoke with great severity about the French bishops.

- 11 expressed his admiration for the desire of all the Sisters to preserve the traditional liturgy of the Order of St. Dominic, the common prayer, the Thomistic theology for the formation of the Sisters, the wearing of the habit, the principle of a strict novitiate, as in the past. But in passing, he gave some examples where more flexibility was sometimes necessary according to the place, the circumstances, the dioceses,

I Main causes of rupture

according to the opinion of the bishops for more opportunities or a momentary peace good.

I believe that I have translated the essence of this conversation and I am ready to testify, under oath, that this is what Father Van den Broeck expressed, in spirit if not in words

Again, in Toulouse, a Sister tells us:

To my question, "What does Rome think?" "Do not speak of Rome, nor of the Holy Father, nor of the Sacred Congregation of religious. There are as many Congregations in Rome as there are people, and as many thoughts as there are circumstances. "

In Bordeaux, another notes these words from the visiting father:

The bishops I saw were infinitely less nasty than in their letters. Some even admitted to me that they had only written at the request of one of them; one, however, allowed me to use his testimony; they are related to each other. Beware of Bishop Fréteillières, do not let the Mother Prioress write to him any more, and do not write to the bishops yourself; to all of them, answer: we are on an apostolic visit, I cannot decide anything.

One last testimony, taken from among several others that could have been quoted, forms a sort of synthesis of the whole: Great was my astonishment at the time of my interview - around Easter 1972 - with the Reverend Father, to note that, in spite of the praise he gave to our Mother General, guilty only of having "the defects of her immense qualities", in spite of the reproaches which he agreed with me to oppose to the meanness of certain disputes which drew their strength from wounded self-esteem In spite of his astonishment at the means of pressure used in France in the liturgical and catechetical domains, the Reverend Father was making me see a whole arsenal of measures apparently tending to disarm the opposition. Here are the reasons for my astonishment.

- The Father had been given a precise mission: to analyze a situation and report back. He presented himself as a reformer.

sister Marie-Jean Senacq.

April 16 - 22, 1973, :

A

Breakup or loyalty

- The reform he advocated undermined the juridical foundations of the Congregation from top to bottom and thus finally vindicated the sowers of disorder.
- Since the visit was requested by the government of the Congregation, how can we understand that it led to the ruin of its authority? Was this not a breach of trust?

The Mother General attributed to the activities of the Visitor the decree of the Sacred Congregation of November 7, 1972, which made him president of the future Chapter of election, a decree against which she was trying to appeal. She believed she discerned in his suggestions a determined will to break the stability of the Congregation by modifying its mode of government. A reading of the testimonies quoted moderates this assessment somewhat, while at the same time bringing out more clearly the role played by the bishops of the dioceses. It seems more accurate to see in the decisions of the Visitor an attempt to disarm the opposition by advocating "democratic" reforms that would reassure the supporters of greater modernity, while at the same time taking advantage of the present situation of the Congregation which he thought would not be harmed by this new mode of representation since the majority of the Sisters were traditional in their thinking. Was there only naivety in such a calculation? It is difficult to say.

In any case, these proposals offended the entire Congregation.

In the appeal that the Congregation filed in Rome on March 1, 1973, all of these concerns, which gradually became certainties, are clearly explained:

All violations of the law are originally related to essential changes in our constitutions. These mutations affect:

- how to prepare the general chapter,
- the canonical rules of its dress.

17 - 25 May 1973, !

r Marie-Béatrix Cambiez.

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- its normal, canonically defined powers, and on all these points the powers of the Superior General and her

In order to arrive at such serious provisions, the dicastery relied solely on the reports of the apostolic visitation and on the opinion of Father Van den Broeck. These two documents are, to this day, totally unknown to us, but we can perhaps get an idea of them from two documents in our possession:

- a circular letter addressed on August 16, 1972 by the Visitor to all the Sisters,
- a letter from the same to the Reverend Mother General dated October 26, 1972.

On reading the first of these two documents, we see that the Visitor had the project of modifying two articles of our Constitutions: those which regulate the composition of the members of the General Chapter and the mode of election of certain delegates.

The truth is that the canonical visitation clearly led to a result that was totally unrelated to the difficulties that had

given rise to it. The cross-referencing of the documents shows that the diocesan bishops intervened to obtain from Rome, through this visitation, an adjustment of the government of the Congregation which had so notoriously opposed the episcopal directives in the preceding years, and which the bishops felt powerless to obtain by themselves. Where did this unyielding opposition come from?

When she contested the conclusions of the canonical visitation, Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin recalled the unanimity of the Congregation around its proper purpose: the Catholic education and teaching of young girls. At that time, she spoke of the differences that had arisen between the Congregation and the diocesan bishops on this subject. It is obvious that these differences resurfaced at the time of the canonical process.

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Relations with the diocesan bishops

As soon as she became general, Mother Anne-Marie was in opposition to several French bishops who wanted to impose on free education the school map, the new catechism - or compulsory fund -, co-education and other reforms contrary to the principles of Catholic schools.

The correspondence she exchanged with Father de Sentenac, director of Catholic education in Toulon, sums up well the disputes raised.

The Congregation had refused the regrouping of the school map which would have entrusted to one school all the primary classes of the diocese, to another those of the middle school, and to yet another those of the high school -

with the aim of increasing the number of students and bringing the structures of the Congregational schools closer to those of the state education system. Mother Anne-Marie had refused, because, she wrote, “there is no valid formation except in continuity, in the unity of formation. She protested against the “apparently seductive and evangelical” idea of

a spectacle given to the world of different horns [almost non-existent at the moment] bending together over the same children and working with them, with different spiritualities and methods...

More profoundly, she stated that the Congregation would never accept the contract of association either, thinking rather of freeing itself from the simple contract one day or another. Experience proves sufficiently, she wrote, that one does not receive money from the state with impunity: little by little one becomes enslaved to its methods and directives.

Her refusal of guidance services had been forceful; even more so, her refusal of psychological counselors:

No medicine, no psychology, no psychiatry will ever replace the attentive presence of a heart given to its pupils, and the maternal intuition of educators all turned towards the children. We do not want to make our children into cases to be

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We love and honor them too much for that.

This letter of December 17, 1969, addressed to Sentenac’s father, ended as follows:

In order to be understood by the modern world, in order not to be cut off from the modern world, we believe that it is not a question of secularizing our teaching but of intensifying its own character, of improving its methods. We believe that instead of aligning ourselves with the world and with the structures of the State, we must bring the integral and unchanging Gospel to our children. The future of our teaching Congregations is at stake, and you know this as well as I do, Father, and I dare to hope that you will be able to defend the eternal laws of religious life, rethought in the light of a very precise work of the Church, the teaching and education of children, at the same time as you want to defend the souls of the children entrusted to us. With the regret of disappointing you in every way, my Reverend Father, I beg you to believe in my prayer for you and for your office in the diocese of Toulon, and in my sole desire to serve Jesus Christ in the souls of children.

Such a letter had been answered, not only by Father de Sentenac, but by Bishop Barthe himself, for whom Father de Sentenac was only the spokesman. The bishop reproached Mother for her “passionate judgments”, “of which experience,” he wrote, “had taught him enough that one should not be too moved by them. As for the substance of the question, the bishop asked Mother for “a better understanding of the solidarity that must unite those who work in the houses of Catholic education. He recalled the need for obedience to the Church.

In the course of this correspondence, an interesting aspect comes to light: beyond the fundamental question of Catholic teaching, two different conceptions of the relationship between the diocesan bishop and the major superior of a religious congregation become apparent. On March 25, 1970, Mother Anne-Marie replied

to Bishop Barthe, again justifying his refusals with substantive considerations on the issues raised:

I admire Father de Sentenac's dedication and honesty, I also admire his know-how and his competence, I cannot thank him for not taking into account the possibilities and the desires of others. Others, quieter than I, and with less anger and violence to blame, suffer like us from the school maps that they want to impose on us in the name of I don't know what pastoral concern, but when we appear before the Lord, I will only have to answer for myself, for my government during this torn and heart-rending time, and for the service of the souls of the children who will have been entrusted to us. I may answer that I voluntarily sacrificed children's souls only out of obedience to this or that diocesan director, but I will be no less guilty and nothing and no one will help me to justify my complicity... In spite of all that separates us, I repeat to you, Excellency, my will to serve only Jesus Christ, even in your diocese. Our paths are different, but our basic will is the same: to serve Jesus Christ, so I have no doubt that one day our paths will meet and I hope that it will be as close as possible. For my part, I want to work on it. With the certainty that the Lord who suffered and who suffers in each one of us, through us, with us and for us, is definitively risen, I pray that this painful passion that the Church is going through at the present time will lead to the life, the light and the truth that is the Lord Jesus Christ.

The archives of the diocese of Toulon have preserved the epistolary exchanges of the bishop of the diocese with the different priests in charge of Catholic education. These letters reveal the other conception of the relationship between the diocesan bishop and the major superior of a religious congregation. On April 30, 1970, Father Lacourt, a

Jesuit, wrote these interesting lines to Father de Sentenac who asked him for advice, in the name of the bishop of Toulon, who was obviously powerless in the face of the opposition of Mother Anne-Marie and the prioress of the house in Toulon, the Cours Saint-Dominique:

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As for the question asked by the Bishop of Fréjus-Toulon, here is finally what I think I should say to you and which may help you to answer the Bishop:

- The Joint Commission of Major Superiors is a study commission. It has no power, least of all with regard to a general superior.
- She willingly gives her considered opinion to anyone who asks. You ask us. Unfortunately the Mother Prioress does not ask us!
- This opinion is first of all general. A religious congregation must make every effort to respond to the needs of the diocesan pastoral ministry, taking into account the situation of the congregation (the particular apostolic aim of a given community, its mentality, its age, its numbers).
- In this particular case, the position of the Mother Prioress calls for many remarks. Many of the points she contests are practiced elsewhere by Congregations, including the Dominicans, with spiritual authenticity and true apostolic fruits. The diocese, from its point of view, can therefore legitimately ask this Congregation for the essential modifications proposed. A Mother Superior General must do everything possible to try to respond to this, while

remaining the judge, after hearing her advice, of whether she can ask her Congregation to do so.

- The bishop will judge whether he can convince her of the need, or find a solution with this Dominican congregation in case she believes she must stay in her position. The question may then arise as to whether this Congregation can continue to work in this city, in the diocese, without blocking the general situation, and preventing others from carrying out a better overall task.

This is what I can draw from our exchanges. A personal word now: if I had been able to free myself, I would have sincerely liked to go and see the Superior General, and help her to reflect in the direction of Monsignor, spiritually. This is not possible, I wonder, and I suggest to you, if it would not be possible for Monsignor Barthe to call, through the Dominican Father Provincial, a balanced Dominican religious who is aware of this kind of problem: there must be some among the Fathers who deal with religious. Much more than our commission,

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it would have weight... This letter, I am aware, marks our limits of action, both at the level of the institution, and of the nuns involved...

Shortly afterwards, the Archbishop of Aix, Charles de Provençères, informed Bishop Barthe confidentially that the Superior of the Holy Name of Jesus had “read a declaration in each of the communities” of which he sent a copy. He added:

I am also sending you a copy of the letter I sent to Bishop Guyot, Ordinary of the Generalate. I insist on the confidential nature of my intervention. I will keep you informed of the answer of Bishop Guyot, who is in a better position than we are to judge the situation exactly. According to what one Sister told me, there are three or four Sisters in Marseilles who, according to the expression of the Superior General, have a “bad conscience”; two or three in Grasse, and probably one in Toulon.

The declaration was the circular of November 17, 1971, addressed by Mother Anne-Marie to the entire Congregation and already mentioned above.¹⁸ The declaration was made in the form of a letter to all the members of the Congregation.

It is interesting to see that this letter, intended only for the members of the Congregation, was given at least to the bishops of the three dioceses of Toulouse, Toulon, and Aix. On December 16, 1971, Bishop de Provençères wrote to Bishop Guyot: The fundamental choices of the Institute reflect a position of refusal which has marked the Institute for a long time, refusal of everything that is being done, of everything that is in the air at the present time, as the note says, but also of the orientations of the French episcopate and even on certain points of those of the Holy See. Thus, many want to keep the Pius V missal (the superior declares that she has obtained an inducement from the Holy See to this effect). According to a rather general procedure, the orientations of the French bishops are presented as not being in conformity with those of the pope; it is said that one must obey a bishop in communion with the pope, but one leaves to hover as if a doubt on

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the truth of the communion of the French bishops with the Pope. Regardless of the consultation that is being done now, I wonder if the spiritual freedom of the Sisters is being respected and if the Holy See should not be informed since it alone has the authority to verify this. Obviously, we should act with great caution; the Congregation has already experienced a crisis a few years ago.

The bishop enclosed a copy of the reply he had personally received from Bishop Guyot as a note to Bishop Barthe.¹⁹

Your letter confirmed everything I already knew," wrote the Archbishop of Toulouse. First of all, I had a long meeting with Father Nicolas, who told me that he did not agree with Mother General's position, but that he had only accepted her proposal in order to find a solution to the problem posed by the events. Mother General came to see me and we spoke at length. In full agreement with Father Nicolas and myself, she has just written to the Prefect of the Congregation of Religious to ask for instructions and to request that a canonical visitor be sent. I, too, have written to Cardinal Antoniutti warning him of the present malaise and telling him that serious divisions threaten the Congregation if the authority of the Holy See does not help it to make the necessary discernment in order to remain faithful to the Holy Church. I have not alluded in my talks to your intervention, but I think that a letter to Cardinal Antoniutti from you and perhaps from the other bishops concerned would be likely to enlighten and support my own request. Thank you in advance.

On December 30 of that year, Bishop de Provencheres wrote to Cardinal Antoniutti. The letter summarized the bishop's thoughts on the subject of the Mother General and the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus, insisting on an attitude of "refusal of everything that is being done, of everything that is in the air at the present time.

19 - The time when these epistolary exchanges took place coincides with that of Mother Anne-Marie's accident and the memorable visit of the archbishop to the bedridden superior, described in note 5 on p. 260.

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Thus, he wrote, those in charge would approve the statement of Father [Calmel] that appeared in *Itinéraires* in January 1970, and was reproduced in the supplement of the same month of the Catholic Counter-Reformation in the Twentieth Century, "A Dominican says no to the new Mass. The superior even obtained an inducement authorizing the institute to keep the Pius V missal.

He concluded: If a canonical visitor is sent, it is important that he not have the reputation of having more or less discussed the conciliar reform.

Parallel to the canonical visitation already mentioned, a dossier of accusations was prepared by a few Sisters of the Congregation (a dozen, it seems) and sent to Rome, with the support of the bishops of the dioceses concerned. In addition to the letters from the bishops, it contained some testimonies from lay people, mostly parents of students, addressed to the local Ordinaries and sent to Rome for information. Dr. Loubat, for example, in a letter of January 20, 1972, summarized with indignation a discussion he had

had with the Sisters of the Cours Saint-Dominique in Toulon and which had scandalized him:

A long discussion followed, from which I want to extract, as much as possible

objectively possible, which was incriminated, and which I can summarize as follows:

- on the whole: “hasty” measures taken in the great “mess” of the last few years, often not ratified by all the bishops and cardinals, but somehow imposed by small pressure groups and then presented to the pope as states of affairs.
- In detail, several points: the new liturgy. How can we accept, for example, the prayer that follows the consecration “We proclaim your death... We await your coming in glory”, when the Lord is there, really present; why wait for his coming, if we believe that he is there?
- The new catechism, made for a non-Christianized urban environment. How can we be satisfied with it in an institution like this, when so many truths of the faith are not mentioned?

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- The new hymns, and especially in I seek the face of the Lord the phrases: “You are the body of Christ, you are the blood of Christ”. The first statement is acceptable if it is understood as “the mystical body of Christ”. But the second is not suitable for Catholics...
- The new way of taking communion that my mother told me was imposed by the clergy of some parishes.

To this worried father, Bishop Barthe replied:

Although deeply saddened by the events it relates, your letter is precious to me and I am grateful to you for having written it with such simplicity. Bishops are not always well informed!

It is not my intention to make detailed judgments about everything that has been the subject of conversation. I could say that, for example, the criticism of the acclamation in a missal explicitly recognized and recommended by the pope and 1 set of bishops is a misunderstanding which, if it were conscious, would be a heresy. The other criticisms appear to be hasty generalizations of some excessive experiences which I do not intend to approve, or narrowness of judgment which, alas, is difficult to reform.

It is sure, however, that to support is not to approve. Your letter, coming after others, is a new opportunity for me to intervene. I am not responsible for the success of my intervention, at least on the local level. It seems that, contrary to canon law, these nuns have superiors who exempt them from obeying the local Church leader. Is it true that they even claim that one must “submit to the pope only when he speaks the truth”?

Another episode in the history of the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus, in a somewhat similar area, pitted the Mother General against the diocesan bishop of Nice, Bishop Jean Mouisset. The institution of St. Martha, run by the Sisters, had employed a teacher, Mr. Roy, for more than ten years. In August 1970, Ms. Roy was dismissed for remarrying after a divorce. She then claimed sixty dollars from the Sisters.

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thousand francs in damages. The Sisters refused this abusive demand and M^{me} c Roy announced that she would take the case to court. The Sisters decided not to be intimidated. They made arrangements and their case was pleaded before the court of first instance in Grasse. Basing itself on the collective agreements of the free education sector, the court considered that “the religious convictions of the employee were taken into consideration at the time of the conclusion of the employment contract”, and that “this element, of the agreement of wills, which usually remains outside the employment relationship, was incorporated into the contractual field, and became an essential and determining part of it”. The court therefore considered that the dismissal of M^{me} Roy was not unfair. Roy’s dismissal was not abusive since, by her divorce and remarriage, she had broken with the way of life and the ideal advocated by the Catholic institution.

In this episode, the parents of the students of St. Martha’s institution supported the nuns at the same time as they defended the rights of Catholic parents. But the local bishop did not take the same position. In a letter dated May 1, 1971, he asked Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin to abandon the lawsuit and to find a compromise solution. He wrote:

Why? Because this conflict has already been mentioned in the press, without any kindness for the Dominican Sisters of Grasse or for Catholic education in general; because, as for the outcome of the trial, it would be an illusion to believe that a conclusion concerning a non-abusive rupture of contract would solemnly consecrate the proper character of Catholic establishments and would allow the dismissal, without abuse, of the divorced-remarried professors who work in these establishments; These are the legal reasons that make the local bishop, the general secretariat of Catholic education, and the national office of the APELs,

favour an arrangement. Of course, I recognize the right of a Catholic educational establishment to separate from a divorced teacher when he or she remarries. But this is neither a matter of serious professional misconduct nor, in the present state of

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of a scandal that should lead to immediate dismissal as a sanction...

The response of the Superior General showed once again, in this conjuncture, different conceptions of the requirements of Catholic teaching:

I received your letter of May 1 yesterday and I thank you for it, but, as disappointing as it may seem to you, I cannot accept the proposals you are making. I refuse them, but not without explaining myself. Do you want to scorn us by forcing us, against our conscience, to recognize that we were wrong to separate from a divorced and remarried teacher, when the law is for us and you yourself, Monsignor, recognize this right for a Catholic establishment? In spite of all the esteem and friendship we have for this teacher, we think above all of our responsibility as Christian educators, of the souls of the children entrusted to us. In a house of education, is not the first good to be considered that of the children? Or should we be in solidarity with the corruption of morals in France today, pretending that there has been no scandal?

The positions of the Superior General and the diocesan bishop were perceived by the laity as two opposing conceptions of the Catholic demands of teaching. After learning of Bishop Mouisset's letter, the Sisters' lawyer, Hubert Le Griel, summarized the positions as follows

Of course, there is much to be said about Bishop Mouisset's letter. But is that necessary? It is enough to note that your epistolary exchanges are a dialogue of the deaf.

Indeed, your concerns are solely religious, moral and educational. As you have devoted your life to this, you express yourself with faith, conviction and logic. On the contrary, Bishop Mouisset has only political, social and legal concerns. As he was not made for this, his words are contradictory, ambiguous and reveal his total incompetence in dealing with these questions.

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For their part, the parents of the Catholic Family Association, AFC, wrote a press release which they published in the

The federal office [of the AFC] reaffirms the right of parents to provide their children with the education and instruction of their choice: a right recognized by the Church as well as by international authorities and recalled by Vatican II; reminds us that if, in the contract of association with the public education system, decisions must be taken in agreement with the rector (which can go against the proper character of the Catholic school), the law, in the simple contract (Sainte-Marthe), recognizes the right of choice and decision to the parents and to the director: the next verdict will say if the families have been deceived or if they possess the free exercise of their rights; points out that the Supreme Pontiff Paul VI has just recalled that the Church forbids divorce, and a fortiori cannot support the remarriage of the divorced. If a teacher and an educator are no longer in communion with the purpose of the institution, if their internal or external behavior is in public contradiction with its purpose, loyalty should prompt the person concerned to seek another direction.

These two episodes underline the second point that led the Sisters to have recourse to Rome. The canonical visitation was intended to clarify a conflicting situation between the diocesan bishops and the Superiors of the Congregation. The latter had no doubt that Rome would understand their concerns and would know how to do justice.

But it was not to be.

4

Canonical sanctions

Here we must resume the chronological account of events, which we interrupted to analyze the causes of the rupture. These causes, whether distant or proximate, were to find their outcome in the canonical sanctions which were to strike the general superior.

While the canonical procedures in Rome were underway

after the apostolic visitation and the appeal, the Superior General of the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus took a decision which, according to the documents consulted, was the detonator of the canonical sanctions which were soon to strike her.

From Toulon to Brignoles

In the difficult context of Catholic education in France at that time, Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin decided to accede to the request of a small group of Sisters of the Congregation who, desiring to live a religious life entirely faithful to the Constitutions, and presenting the need for an authentic Catholic education for the children, asked to be established in an establishment that would bring them all together. In a letter written to Mother Anne-Marie on August 29, 1973,

Father Calmel explained all the reasons which seemed to him to be militant in favor of the establishment of a school for children.

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The letter was written in favor of such a regrouping. The reading of this letter allows us to better grasp the acuteness of the debates and the real case of conscience that they represented for the Superior General because of the terribly difficult context. Through the lines, it is possible to discover Mother Anne-Marie's argumentation, based on the desire to avoid a rupture that would be tragic for a great number of Sisters who were not sufficiently lucid. The friendship between the Father and the Superior also emerges in this letter which maintains a peaceful character, even though the positions are opposed: Your letter was very welcome... Yes, it is before Our Lord that you bear your responsibility as Superior and for his love... Concerned before God for the spiritual good of all, it is above all for the young people who have chosen your Congregation for what it is, in this period of general apostasy, it is above all for these neophytes that you must be concerned.

Some Sisters of 50 or 60 years of age, who have gone over to a certain modernism, do not run the danger of marrying or apostasizing. They have allowed themselves to be led astray; it is probable that they are only weakly inclined towards perfection, but the danger they run is not insurmountable. Quite different is the danger of the neophytes, present or future... The split, effective if not legal, seems to me inevitable. To want absolutely to avoid it, one would expose oneself to drown everything and everyone in the fog and finally to betray the young... What could

prevent the effective, if not legal, split: a personal attachment to their general mother (I know. There is also the motive of the one who prefers to see clearly - let the light show them that the abomination of desolation is in the holy place and that this entails for you a greater demand for holiness. But there are few who love the light so much) that would make many Sisters have the fortitude to look closely at the modernist innovations, that is, the indefinite and convergent changes of a dissolution process covered by "the Church", (...) so Sisters who, out of attachment to you, would look this abomination in the face, call it by its name of apostasy, unconditionally rally to your choice to keep the

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Tradition...? To state these three conditions to avoid the split, (...) is already to have answered no. Do you realize how little we count as long as the authority continues to be infiltrated... Most cannot believe that we are in the right; most cannot consent to examine - it is both cowardice on their part and a little culpable weakness - even as a hypothesis, that Paul VI and collegiality change religion. Most of them do not want a light that manifests this monstrosity (which requires, in return, a very great holiness on the part of the one who sees). (...) One would like to be very holy when one writes such serious things. But my imperfection does not mean that they are not true and saving.

In the face of such insistence, supported by arguments of which she was not unaware while still hoping to be able to save the unity of the Congregation, despite the advice of her General Council, and even though she herself would have preferred not to adopt this solution which would have

introduced a rupture in the Congregation, Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin allowed the acquisition of a property on the heights of the hinterland, in Brignoles, and she installed the Sisters concerned there. The Saint-Dominique course in Toulon was closed. This decision aroused the emotion of the people of Toulon, and caused indignation among the members of the general secretariat of the Catholic teaching of the diocese. Taken to task, Bishop Barthe answered them on February 28, 1974:

I have received your letter of January 14 concerning the withdrawal of the Dominican nuns from Toulon. If you have an effective solution to propose to me in order to change the decisions of these nuns who have always refused the directives of the diocesan Catholic teaching and who only do as they please, you would oblige me by indicating it. I write this without irony. I am sorry, but I am more and more convinced that a bishop, especially today, is only a bishop who is powerless to control initiatives. Please accept, dear Father, my best wishes.

After a few exchanges of letters, the bishop and the Superior General did not reach an agreement.

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For its part, the General Council of the Congregation strongly reproached the Superior for her action. Mother Jeanne-Thérèse Messal wrote to her:

Mother, you are very hurt by my reaction this morning, but no doubt not surprised. I myself am very hurt, because whatever I said to you about your ideas and your different conception of the vocation of the Congregation, I keep my affection for you and my admiration for what you are. I

cannot share all your ideas; do not think that it is by a choice of ease. You follow your conscience: mine forbids me to follow you to the end. Even if I have to withdraw from the council, it will be with great pain, I have never tolerated that you are attacked in front of me; I will not tolerate it any more in the future.

I have not yet been able to pray and reflect on the substance of the question; we will take up this morning's conversation in calm, certainly with suffering, but already it seems to me that the houses of the Congregation are a property of the Congregation; any change (...) can only be the result of conversations, of numerous exchanges. Another solution could have been envisaged that would have allowed the Sisters to have this experience of the absolute... But it is not at the moment when we are in some way "on probation" that we should commit the whole Congregation.

The decree of 27 May 1974

Shortly thereafter, and clearly linked to this episode, the Sacred Congregation for Religious issued a decree on May 27, 1974, which was the result of the canonical visitation and of the appeals that the Sisters had believed they could file in Rome.

The document, signed by Cardinal Arturo Tabera and his secretary Mgr Augustin Mayer, was written as follows After having examined the present situation of the Dominican Teaching Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus, the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, on the advice of

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unanimously of the Congress of May 14, 1974, considered it appropriate to settle this matter in the following manner:

1. Given the present state of polarization in the Institute, for serious pastoral reasons, the General Chapter is postponed to a date to be set later by the Dicastery, after timely consultations.

2. The mandate of the Superior General, which had ended by right in 1973, but was in fact extended during the appeal to the *Segnatura Apostolica*, is declared completed.

3. The Sacred Congregation appoints as General Administrator *ad nutum*, until the next General Chapter: Sister Marie-Rose Tassy.

4. The administrator will govern the institute with the help of the religious assistant and the collaboration of a small provisional council composed of the following two sisters: Sister Marie-Danielle Ferai and Sister Hyacinthe Girard.

5. For the sake of goodness and peace, it is stipulated that at the next General Chapter of Elections, Sister Anne-Marie Simoulin will not have the passive voice.

6. The new leadership will do everything in its power to maintain the unity of the institute, conceding, if necessary, a legitimate pluralism in homogeneous houses, always safeguarding adherence to the doctrine of the magisterium, obedience to the Holy See and docility to the hierarchy.

The link between the sanction and the opening of Saint-Pré in Brignoles was not lost on the General Council. Before the sanction was pronounced and after she had so vigorously manifested her opposition to the decision taken by her Superior General, Mother Jeanne-Thérèse Messal, made aware of the grievances that the bishops were formulating against Mother, was outraged; she wrote to Mother Anne-Marie:

Since Father Bouchet cannot find a text to say whether the vote of the council was consultative or deliberative for the Toulon affair, I am ready to maintain that it was your right to act as you did, if you are attacked on this point. (...) If things go wrong, I will defend you with all the more heart that I will have kept the freedom to say what I still think. Have a good weekend. Let's save our strength for the

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difficulties of the decades to come. With all my affection and

But the penalty had fallen all the same.

On May 27, 1974, the same Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes wrote to Mother Anne-Marie:

After having carefully and serenely examined the present situation of your institute, the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes has judged it necessary to take the decisions which have been communicated to you by His Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop of Toulouse. The Sacred Congregation does not conceal the fact that the measures in question will be painfully felt by you; it wishes to assure you that these are only measures that will make it possible to restore among the Sisters the union of hearts that has been disturbed in recent times. I am convinced that the spirit of faith and the supernatural love of your Sisters will help you to adhere with heart and soul to these decisions, and I beg you to accept, my Reverend Mother, the assurance of my religious devotion.

On June 5, 1974, the deposed Superior General wrote to the new Administrator General, Mother Marie-Rose:

I come to tell you again what I told you spontaneously on the phone on Monday afternoon: Rome has spoken, I submit immediately and joyfully take back my place as a Sister in the Congregation. I am aware, however, that I am giving the impression of abandoning and betraying all the Sisters, especially the young ones, who have followed me.) I therefore ask you again to have the charity not to tempt us beyond our strength; help us to be faithful to the Lord, in the Congregation, by grouping us in homogeneous communities with prioresses whom we can legitimately obey according to our convictions, around priests faithful to our choices. We only want to serve the Lord and the Church peacefully through the children in fidelity to the faith and the teaching of the Church of all times. You have always been good and understanding of people, I am sure that you will understand the drama of our souls and that you will want to help us to remain in the Congregation by allowing us to pray, to work and to teach according to the lights that the Lord gives us

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and for which we are ready to give our lives, if necessary, or to leave the Congregation if we are not assured that we can be at peace. My greatest desire is to be able to simply obey and not to be the leader of the rebellion. The Lord honors me with the honor of carrying the cross after him, may he help me and us not to shirk. I count on you, Mother, to help us and you can count on my fervent prayer and my docility under the conditions you know.

In spite of this letter, Mother Marie-Rose decided to distribute the Sisters of Brignoles and all those in the Congregation who had clearly expressed their choice in favor of the traditional positions that Mother Anne-Marie had

defended, in different houses anchored in the most innovative choices.

The Sisters gathered in Brignoles 20 , to whom the novice mistress and some young Sisters had been added, refused these obediences. The Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, informed of this refusal, asked Bishop Barthe to visit them to reason with them. The bishop was to bring to each Sister personally “a request for recognition of the present government of the Congregation, the concrete conditions expressing her adhesion varying according to the case. This was done through the intermediary of the Vicar General, Father Compans. A personal letter was given to the seventeen perpetually professed sisters. These professed sisters were joined by four sisters in temporary vows and five novices. None of them would accept the monition of the Sacred Congregation of Religious, reiterated three times according to the indications of canon law. Also, on May 24, 1975, a rescript from this same Congregation released from their vows the seventeen perpetually professed sisters grouped at Saint-Pré. This particularly painful news would reach the Sisters at the time of their departure for eternity

20 - Among them was Mother Hélène Jamct, who died and was buried in Brignoles in 1982.

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Calmel, in this very house where he had faithfully accompanied them 21 .

While the Sisters gathered in Brignoles chose the path of rupture immediately, a large number of Sisters, sharing the same desire for religious life, faithful to the 1953 Constitutions and equally convinced of the necessity of a

truly Catholic teaching, tried, according to the rule of conduct chosen by the former Superior General, to remain within the Congregation in order to try to safeguard the essential. In her letter of June 6, 1974 to Cardinal Tabera, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Religious, Mother Anne-Marie summarized the position of these Sisters. She wrote:

Your letter of May 27 and the decretum that accompanied it leave me in peace since they allow me to remain in the Congregation and, through it, in the Church that I passionately love and want to serve until my death. I beg His Eminence to believe that my submission to his decision was immediate and total.

May I add that the ordeal is heavy, not only for me, because what affects me personally is nothing, but for the majority of the Sisters tested in their faith and in their obedience... I had been expecting for a long time the serious sanction that has been imposed on me, because I knew for more than a year that, at the end of 1973, His Eminence Cardinal Guyot had asked that my passive voice be taken away from me at the next General Chapter. I also knew that during his meeting in Rome with Reverend Father Van den Boeck, on March 3, 1973, he had proposed that "the Sacred Congregation appoint ad tempus an administrator with a general council", that on March 6, other proposals (tested in August 1973) had been made and that on March 7, His Eminence, learning of our recourse to the Apostolic Signatura, declared himself ready to open the Chapter; all of this was partially realized. All of this was partially realized.

- Father Calmel passed away on May 3 and was buried in Saint-Pré on May 5, 1975.

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I was not surprised and it is in faith that I want to receive this punishment, I add that my confidence in the Holy See, whatever has been said or written about me on this subject, is not shaken, it remains total. I am a daughter of the Church and want to remain so... I recognize perfectly well the right of the Holy Father to make a new rite and to propose it to the universal Church and I do not suspect in any way that this rite, such as the Holy Father has approved, is heretical, but I also know that the Tridentine Missal, promulgated by the bull *Quo Primum* of Saint Pius V, which I have read and reread, cannot be abrogated.... If I had taken the trouble to ask His Eminence Cardinal Gut in August 1970 to kindly inform me in writing of what I knew to be and what I still know to be the thought of the Holy Father, it was in the concern to obey peacefully and without polemic, With the naive hope of reassuring the Sisters who did not think like me and who have always had the freedom to follow their conscience, I count on His Eminence to help the Sisters who trusted me and who, even more, trust the Church, to help us enjoy this assurance in peace. What the Holy Father has granted to His Eminence Cardinal Heenan for England cannot be accused of heresy or schism in France.

Moreover, we are Dominicans and the Dominican rite, a privilege of the Order, was not abolished by His Holiness Pope Paul VI any more than by Pope Pius V. This is our assurance. I beg His Eminence to help those in charge of governing us not to undermine it, for rather than disobeying within the Congregation, as others have done for other reasons, we will know how to leave it. The trial is already heavy. I cannot believe that this is really what they want to impose on us by forcing us to leave religious life. I hope for everything and I count on the paternal solicitude of our pastors so that they help us to be faithful to the demands of

our faith and do not put us in the situation of breaking our vows. My desire and that of all those in whose name I write this supplication today, addressing myself to Rome for the last time, is to live in docility and peace our life as Dominican nuns consecrated to the service of the children of France. Our submission to the Holy See and to its legitimate representatives is total.

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May His Eminence believe and bless the Sister who is expressing herself in this way. She asks him to receive the expression of her profound and religious respect.

The Sacred Congregation of Religious responded through the intermediary of the Abbot of Sainte-Marie-du-Désert who was still the religious assistant of the Congregation. His reply emphasized what he presented as the real reason for the Sisters' divergence from the hierarchy of the Church:

Certainly," he wrote, "there are permitted differences, even important ones, but they do not break unity. But it is time that all the religious of your Congregation be warned clearly and without any possible ambiguity that this dissociation between the Church of Christ, of which one obviously thinks one is a part, the true Church, and its visible representatives, its authority among us, from which one is withdrawing, cannot be tolerated. An ordinary Christian cannot admit it, all the more so a nun who has taken a vow of obedience...

This last point was certainly not contested by the Sisters: they only recalled that their obedience came up against the decisions of a hierarchy at odds with the Tradition of the Church.

Shortly before these events, when she had already been engaged for several years in her fight for Tradition, Mother Anne-Marie had met with Bishop Marcel Lefebvre in whom she had found an echo of her concerns. On November 21, 1974²², the bishop was to make a public declaration which the media would immediately relay and in which he affirmed

22 - On November 11, 1974, an apostolic visit was made to Ecône, following complaints from the French bishops against this seminary, which kept the Mass and Tradition and received vocations while their own seminaries were emptying. The seminary in Ecône had received a letter of praise from the prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy, Cardinal John Joseph Wright, three years earlier, in 1971. The two apostolic visitors, Bishop Albert Descamps, secretary of the Biblical Commission, and Bishop Guillaume Onclin, assistant secretary for the revision of canon law, went to Ecône. The prelates scandalized the seminarians and their teachers with their attitude and especially their theological remarks. As a result of this visit, Archbishop Lefebvre wrote the declaration quoted in our text on November 21, 1974.

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His statement was a response - involuntary of course - to the Abbot's warning: "We must not forget that the Church is a very important institution. His statement was an involuntary response to the Abbot's warning:

We adhere with all our heart and soul to Catholic Rome, guardian of the Catholic faith and of the traditions necessary to maintain this faith; to eternal Rome, teacher of wisdom and truth. On the other hand, we refuse, and have always

refused, to follow the Rome of neo-modernist and neo-Protestant tendencies which was clearly manifested in the Vatican Council 11, and after the Council in all the reforms which followed. All these reforms, in fact, have contributed and still contribute to the demolition of the Church, to the ruin of the priesthood, to the annihilation of the sacrifice and of the sacraments, to the disappearance of religious life, to a naturalist and Teilhardian teaching in the universities, in the seminaries and in the catechesis; a teaching coming from liberalism and from Protestantism, condemned many times by the solemn magisterium of the Church.

No authority, not even the highest in the hierarchy, can compel us to abandon or diminish our Catholic faith, clearly expressed and professed by the magisterium of the Church for nineteen centuries!

The election chapter of July 1974

The Chapter of election which should have put an end to the extraordinary situation of the Congregation opened on July 7, 1974. As was customary, the Superior General, although deposed, had to give a report on her government. This text gives a picture of the Congregation on that date.

170 Sisters, 151 of whom were in perpetual vows, looked after the 5,280 students who attended the schools of the Congregation: 1,702 in the parish schools and 3,578 in the secondary schools. This extremely active apostolate raises the question of the number of new students who, although regular, do not compensate for the high number of deaths in recent years.

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The relationship specifies that, despite this small number, the Superior General wished to remain demanding

in the discernment of vocations and in the acceptance of postulants to the habit and novices to profession, preferring to eliminate those whose adaptation to the religious life of a Dominican teacher seemed doubtful, especially in these difficult times.

As soon as she finished this rapid report on the people, Mother Anne-Marie tackled one by one the burning issues. The first one that appeared, after a brief reminder of the care the Congregation had taken in recent years to look after the poorest sectors of society, was that of the transfer of the Saint-Dominique course from Toulon to Saint-Pré. In this document, Mother sets out her thoughts on the subject in the clearest and most precise manner. This document, which we remember was later approved by two capitulants, was received without question. It presents the exact relation of the events:

Moreover, in November 1973, I gave permission to the Mother Prioress and the community of the Cours Saint-Dominique in Toulon to break all contracts with the State, in order to further characterize their house, and to open a boarding school entirely free and to transfer their house from Toulon to the countryside. On December 31, 1973, I authorized them to move to the Saint-Pré estate in the town of Brignoles. Why did you buy a castle with a luxurious appearance, I was told? To give a greater appearance of poverty, it would have been necessary to buy land and build something new, which would have required a lot of time and would have cost as much or more than the opportunity offered. We felt that the time saved was more valuable than ever, especially when it comes to the souls of children. One of the concerns of the community is to make this house a house of God for children, which will remedy its external defects.

If I have given my consent to a project that is not mine, it is because I believe that there must be room in the Congregation for houses as characterized as the one in question can be

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I am convinced that we must urgently break the contracts with the State and with certain intermediary organizations which hinder our freedom, in order to recover true freedom of teaching and to give a much more Christian character to all our houses. However, to remove any ambiguity, I want to clarify my position. The charism of the Sisters of St. Pre is not entirely mine: if I am convinced that the Lord asks us to purify our methods and to have the courage of clear-cut situations, I cannot resign myself to dedicating my apostolate only to a few children and families chosen according to very precise choices. The Lord asks me to try to bring the truth to all the children whose families want to entrust us.

As one can easily guess, the rest of the report on the general conditions of the Congregation exposes the practice of these constitutions for which so many battles were fought. The unanimity of the Sisters around the Constitutions is evident in most of the remarks, but the conditional tense sometimes used, the frequent use of restrictions - perhaps oratorical, for some - leave no doubt that, in spite of the directives applied by almost all the Sisters, a small group did not adopt the positions of the Mother General during her government: it is stated that "the Sisters as a whole seem to respect prayer", that "all the houses, but not all, remain faithful to the monthly retreat", that "all the Sisters, with some exceptions, continue to wear the Dominican habit and wish to keep it", that "the Sisters in the majority of the communities, go to the cinema, to the theater or to concerts only for scholastic

necessities which we want to be rare and always controlled"... Only one point is totally exempt from restriction, that of teaching:

All the Sisters, it is said, devote themselves to it with zeal according to the obedience received. The novices receive a doctrinal formation unified by the theology of Saint Thomas. But for the past three years, we have given up sending the young professed sisters to the Studium

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of the Dominican fathers of Toulouse because the intensive regime of studies imposed on them for a year, for which they were not ready, was, for most of them, more a cramming than a theological culture. Moreover, the range of courses given was such that a previous Thomistic theological training would have been necessary to assimilate and benefit from them.

On the other hand, two domains offer the image of the separation of the Congregation: that of the Mass, in Latin or in French, and that of the Office.

All the Sisters, it is said, attend Holy Mass daily. But in very few houses do they all hear the same Mass - for different reasons.

And about the Office, it is specified:

The choral recitation of the Dominican Breviary in Latin according to the constitutions is also daily in the majority of the houses. In 1970, however, the Mother General and her Council granted some houses, at their request, dispensation to recite certain parts of the Office in Latin and authorization to say them in French.

The last part of this relationship offered the Mother General, who had been deposed three months earlier, the opportunity to publicly recall the reasons for her choices, the present nature of her feelings about the sanctions that affected her, her desires and hopes for the future. This rather long text cannot be overlooked:

In accordance with #413 of our Constitutions, I have been meeting regularly with the prioresses and those responsible for formation until this year, wanting to ensure the direction of the Congregation as well as to bring the prioresses closer together, to stimulate and encourage them by a common reflection on the essential problems of our life as Dominican teaching sisters consecrated to the service of children. For at least four years, we have also tried to promote, encourage and foster working meetings throughout the Congregation. For two years we ourselves organized meetings of teachers of small classes, sessions of philosophical work on idealism, work days

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theological formation. Only the crisis of the Church followed by the internal division which has become more and more severe and deepened in the Congregation in recent years has put an end to this loyal attempt at common formation. My attempt at clarification in November 1971, our appeal to the Sacred Congregation of Religious, the Apostolic Visitation and our recourse to the Apostolic Signatura, far from calming things down, only aggravated the situation and brought us to where we are today. I had the illusion of believing that telling the truth to my Sisters was to honor them and serve the common good. I have only widened the gap.

As early as Christmas 1971, 54 Sisters, all of whom are presently perpetually professed, and 12 Sisters, presently temporarily professed, to whom are added the five novices who also chose our Congregation for its traditional commitments and a few Sisters who were unable to sign the letter at that time, had addressed the following request to me, which I make my own today: "After having learned from the reading of the letter of our ecclesiastical assistant, Reverend Father Marie-Joseph Nicolas, that you and your council have requested a rehs to R ° me ' the Signatories of this letter, moved by the seriousness of the situation, think it useful to reaffirm together their complete accor on all the points that you constantly remind us of: fidelity to traditional prayer, zeal for the education of children and their authentically Christian formation, possible independence with regard to organizations likely to reduce our freedom as Dominican teaching nuns; in a word, all that is implied in a life of teaching nuns of the traditional form such as we have vowed to the Lord and which alone seems to us capable of attaining the special end of our Congregation: the Christian education of young girls. It is for this reason that we wish to remain grouped in communities faithful to all these requirements. We entrust these desires to you, my Reverend Mother, asking you, if you deem it necessary, to transmit them to the Sacred Congregation of Religious."

I immediately sent a copy of this letter to Reverend Father Van den Boeck and Reverend Father Nicolas. Today I am delivering it to the Congregation, urging them not to deceive any of us and especially not to

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to disappoint the expectations of young people by not betraying the commitment I had made to them, assuring

them that they would always find in the Congregation communities faithful to the Tradition of the Church and to the religious life of the Dominican teaching sisters.

This report of the deposed superior opened the chapter of election whose sessions were postponed. They never took place.

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The split

Relation of events

Deposed from her position as Superior General in the first days of June 1974, Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin, as we have said, immediately wrote to the Sacred Congregation of Religious to express her total submission to the sanctions imposed upon her. The next day, June 6, 1974, she wrote again to Cardinal Tabera, prefect of the same Sacred Congregation, to obtain for the Sisters who shared her convictions on the liturgy an inducement in favor of the Tridentine Mass. On July 11, Bishop Mayer invited the Mother, in the name of the Sacred Congregation of Religious, to become involved in the

trusting that those in charge of [her] institute [would] look sympathetically at the desires [she] had expressed and [seek] concrete solutions to accommodate them in their legitimate sense.

At the same time that she was making these approaches to the higher authorities in Rome, Mother Anne-Marie sent Mother Marie-Rose a copy of the inducement obtained from Cardinal Gut and begged her, at the same time, to look kindly into the case of the Sisters grouped together at Saint-Pré.

As we remember, the Sacred Congregation of Religious decided definitively for the cancellation of the inducement in favor of

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the Tridentine Mass. When her request was denied, Mother Anne-Marie tried throughout the months of October, November and December 1974 to argue with her Superior General in the name of Church tradition to obtain permission to attend the Tridentine Mass.

From the beginning of 1975, Mother Anne-Marie and the Sisters who shared her struggle began to demand to be reunited with the community of Saint-Étienne-de-Tulmont where Mother Anne-Marie had been named prioress by the General Administrator. This appointment to an exclusively primary parish school, at the head of a community of four Sisters, was felt as a blow to the former Superior by the great majority of the Congregation. Mother Anne-Marie found there, for her part, the opportunity to deploy her gifts as a teacher who could adapt to all ages and situations. Later on, she would evoke this period with a certain tenderness for these little girls from whom she had obtained marvels, especially in theater. But this work with the children was not enough to hide the deep wound caused by her deposition: the support of the Sisters who shared her convictions and her suffering was not only precious but indispensable. Mother also received the support of those outside the Congregation who were also engaged in a real struggle to maintain the faith and tradition of the Church.

At Saint-Étienne-de-Tulmont, Mother Anne-Marie could count on the help of a good group of lay people solidly formed by

the parish priest of Nègrepelisse 23: Father Jean Choulot (1905-1991).

This priest, a Maurrasian, successively parish priest of Montalzat then Verfeil-sur-Seye and finally Nègrepelisse, from 1944 to 1978, organized regular meetings between young people for their

23 - Saint-Étienne-de-Tulmont and Nègrepelisse are a few kilometers apart.

t two villages in Tarn-et-Garonne

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to discover French culture, philosophy, and the teaching of the Church. Among them were Jean Ousset and Jean Masson, who had founded La Cité Catholique on July 29, 1946,²⁴ whose goal was to “train a sufficient number of political and social leaders to be decisive for the benefit of our country, France.

From this was born the review Verbe which later became Permanences, the formation groups or “cells” and the capillary action throughout France, the annual congresses, the publications and the contacts between personalities such as Jean Madiran, Louis Salleron, Gustave Thibon, Maxime Weygand... The exchanges with Father Choulot and with the whole parish community of Nègrepelisse were a great support for Mother Anne-Marie.

The friendship with this parish community was already old and founded on the same struggle. Father Choulot, who had met the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus and Father Calmel at the Lausanne Congress in April 1968, had

asked Mother Anne-Marie at the beginning of 1969 to send Sisters from her Congregation to the parish school to replace the Dominican Sisters from the countryside, who were repulsed by the very traditional orientations of the parish priest. Following the Council, he had taken a growing stand against new ideas, regularly organizing formation meetings and recollections. Priests came from far away to be strengthened by him.

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It was the turn of the parish priest of Nègrepelisse to clearly state his position on this first Sunday of Advent 1969 when the new mass had just been put into service:

Here, nothing will change!

One can guess that Mother Anne-Marie accepted the request of the parish priest without reservation. In September 1969, the first community of the Sisters of the Holy Name arrived in Nègrepelisse: Mother Sainte-Térèse, Sister Marie-Louis and Sister Bernadette-Marie took charge of the Sainte-Thérèse school. Immediately afterwards, the parish priest of Saint-Etienne-de-Tulmont, Father Roux, encouraged by Father Choulot, asked for Sisters for his parish school²⁷ .

In June 1974, after her deposition, Mother Anne-Marie was named prioress of this school. From that time on, Sisters from the Congregation often came to see the former Superior General, to support her in her ordeal and to discuss with her solutions for the future. It was here in March 1975 that Archbishop Lefebvre came to visit Mother. The meeting took place in Gasseras at the rectory of Father Bozoul, a seminary friend of the Prelate of Ecône. The families of Nègrepelisse happily took on the task of welcoming and lodging the bishop and Mother Anne-Marie.

Such delicacy and discreet fidelity were a real relief to the dramatic situation of the Mother. Years later, she spoke of it with gratitude.

Friendships and support also came from elsewhere and further afield.

Thus Abbé Dulac wrote to him:

Very Reverend and dear Mother,

Your letter of yesterday arrived this morning. What else can I say to you at this time, but the words of Job: Dominus dédit, Dominus abstulit. Sit nomen Domirti benedictum!

27 - Testimony of the Brunet and Kothé families, Borderies and Le Bot, January

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Iu scission

I suffer with you and, if I dared, I would say: I suffer in you... I must only, in order to soften the wound, if possible, note that neither the decree nor the letter of dispatch from the Cardinal Prefect pronounces a "sanction" on you, nor even

articulates a “blame”, by taking the two measures: the one which declares your “mandate” (?) 28 of Superior General ended; the one (infinitely more doubtful and questionable) which deprives you of “passive voice” in the next chapter since this measure is taken, it is said, “for the good and peace” (again, one would have to see if the authors of the decree did not mean; “the good of

For his part, Archbishop Lefebvre addressed these words to him on July 13, 1974 and gave his advice:

My Reverend Mother,

(...)] I was amazed to learn from you that what you feared about the Congregation of Religious has indeed happened. I could not suspect that such measures could be taken at this time. I remain deeply saddened by this and assure you of my deep and respectful sympathy in these circumstances, and truly share the pain of all the religious who feel stricken through you.

I am happy for you that you will be able to find yourself in Nègrepelisse where you will obviously be privileged and I thank God for that. But we must think of all the nuns in Toulon, Grasse and Toulouse who will be subjected to recycling and to an intolerable atmosphere, and that is why, personally, I would strongly advise them to ask for secularization and to regroup in an organization that

28 - The term mandate is not explicitly canonical to designate the mission of the religious superior. But it is in common use, and rightly so, because the Superior General receives from the General Chapter, by election, a real mandate to direct the institute according to the constitutions for a strictly determined period of time (she has less power than the Chapter). Dulac is perhaps surprised

by the imprecision of the Roman document: Mother Anne-Marie's mandate was in fact completed, but it had been prolonged because of the postponement of the Chapter, or perhaps his doubt is that she is the only one to have been deposed (cf. letter of October 5, 1975. ctteep. 351).

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allow them to continue the apostolate they have been doing, while also continuing a recruitment process allowing young aspirants to join them.

These words of comfort, the friendship of those who shared her pain and concern were undoubtedly precious to Mother. Even more so those of the Sisters who were faithful to her and who came to see her regularly at Saint-Etienne-de-Tulmont or at Nègrepelisse. For them, and no doubt also thanks to them, Mother Anne-Marie took up the fight again.

In January 1975, Mother addressed these words to her superior: Help us to remain faithful. I also beg you to leave the walls of Saint-Pré to the Sisters who are there and who have worked for the Congregation (...) and who continue to work for the soul of the children of France. I ask you, Mother, that "mercy" not only be shown to the "leftists" of the Congregation, and this is justice. For this to be granted to them, we do not ask for any good from the Congregation... Let us simply have the little that was given to us at Nègrepelisse and at Saint-Etienne-de-Tulmont, so that we may have a mattress, a table, and a chair... It is absolutely necessary that gestures be made that concretize the desire for peace, forgiveness and love. Otherwise they are useless words. I count on you, Mother, to help each one of us and I repeat my prayer to you M .

The Sisters of the Congregation who shared Mother Anne-Marie's convictions asked the General Administrator to be grouped with the former Superior General either at Saint-Etienne or at Nègrepelisse, in order to form a homogeneous house.

29 - On November 6, 1974, Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin had already written the following letter to Mother Marie-Rose: "Public rumor tells me that you, Bishop Collini and Father Decabooter, have asked Rome for a reprimand for Saint-Pré. (...) If there is a reprimand, I would like it to come to me first, and that it be made clear in writing, for it was I who gave them the authorization to transfer the Saint Dominic course from Toulon to Brignoles. What I did, I do not disavow and I take responsibility for it before God, before the Congregation and before St. Pre. "

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On February 25, 1975, they received a reply from the Generalate in the form of a letter to the prioress:

All the Sisters of your community [this is the community of Grasse] and yourself have asked me the same thing: that I appoint you to Nègrepelisse and to Saint-Etienne-du-Tulmont. My answer is therefore intended for all the Sisters of Grasse. The government of the Congregation cannot take the responsibility of regrouping such a large number of Sisters for 150 children when, in addition, this regrouping is motivated by the difficulty of accepting the directives of the Church. I can imagine the disappointment and pain that this letter causes you and I am very saddened by it. I can only pray for you and assure you of my faithful affection.

The Sisters did not consider themselves beaten. Faced with their insistence and that of Mother Anne-Marie, the General Council opened up a possibility of refuge for them for a moment: if a bishop of any diocese agreed to receive them as they were, the Congregation would not oppose it. But while Bishop Puech had initially agreed, Mother Marie-Rose and her assistants made him reconsider his decision, denying the Sisters any hope of a better future.

On May 24, 1975, as a last resort, Mother Anne-Marie sent a letter to the Sacred Congregation of Religious begging one last time that they be given a status in which they could continue to live their religious life in conformity with their conscience. On June 6, they received another negative response from this dicastery.

30 - Mother Marie-Rose gave Mother Anne-Marie, who was indignant about this, the following answer: "I told the Sisters of Grasse in the course of our discussion to 'look for'. That meant, if you can, make an approach to a French bishop with a pastoral responsibility who could receive you in his diocese, it being well understood that any new foundation that would want to remain in the community would be decided only after a dialogue with me and obviously with the agreement of the Ordo, and I repeat my affection for you. (Letter of January 18, 1975)

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Moreover, a few days earlier, on June 1, 1975, the publication of the obediences for the following school year announced the dispersion of the Sisters in all the most innovative houses, prohibiting the desired rapprochement.

This last trait won Mother Anne-Marie's decision: on July 2, 1975, she left to settle down, with the Sisters who wished to follow her, in Fanjjeaux, in order to live a life in conformity with the comsonrôons on which she had made her profession. That same day, the sixteen perpetually professed Sisters, the four temporarily professed Sisters and the two postulants grouped in the house called La CLxrté-Dîeu i Fanjjeaux wrote again to Rome, justifying their decision in the name of Church law:

your rWmrmiraime t teachers of Toulouse have taken an attentive and respectful cotmoissajiiice of your answer that Vtotre EXcefflemœ has kindly made. I have sent a letter to the undersigned by the reverend Mother Anne-Marie* StaoulSto dated May 24, 1975. C-I We renew and confirm our desire to remain in the Congregation of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus, faithful to our profession, to our constitutions and to our customs

Z We request, once again, that the General Chapter, delayed for twenty-three months, be held as soon as possible. Since Your Excellency is willing to assure us that, for this purpose, the Ministry is waiting to carry out the appropriate consultations, we humbly ask to take part in these consultations, under the conditions provided for by the Constitutions and by the law

3 The decree of the Sacred Dicastery dated May 27, 1974, having been provoked by a report of. R.R. Decabooter, we submit to Your Excellency the following remarks and resolutions:

- Since this report has had such serious e/j'étejünd/quesausfa as the appointment of a new general government of our institute and a further indefinite

postponement of the chapter general, we respectfully request that this

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report be communicated to us, for possible contradiction, in judicial form.

- Already, the undersigned observe that in a circular letter sent in the month of June 1974, Father Decabooter thought he could declare "that he had decided to refuse to preside over the General Chapter already convoked for the following month of July by Reverend Mother Simoulin". The reason for this refusal is as follows: "I had, he said, heard from the mouths of some of us, inadmissible remarks concerning the French episcopate, considered - by us - as heretical, concerning the Holy See and even the person of the sovereign pontiff."

- These general and vague allegations, the credibility which the dicastery seems to have given them, and the consequences which they have had, are too serious for us to bear even the slightest suspicion. That is why we have decided to submit the case to the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith for examination.

In consequence, while awaiting the judgment that this supreme Congregation will want to give to our instance, we ask the Sacred Congregation of Religious to place us in the conditions of "absence" foreseen by canon 606 § 2, complete with the recent practice of this Sacred Dicastery.

- In our opinion, this would only be a circumstantial situation, which would not prejudge the definitive grouping into homogeneous houses, which would be left to the decision of the General Chapter.

6. If we ask for a de facto regrouping today, it is because the obediences recently sent for each of us to different houses by the administrative prioress would put us, given our teaching ministry, in a situation that we consider contrary to our commitments. We are willing to prove what we are saying in the course of the procedure mentioned in § 4 above.

The Sisters thus placed their situation under the cover of the law. The Sacred Congregation for Religious acknowledged receipt of the letter, but referred it to the General Administrator

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the possibility of granting or not the request for “absence” claimed by the Sisters. The Sisters decided to have recourse this time to the Official of the Diocese of Nice, Canon Becauvène. The letter, dated July 22, states that the Sisters are taking this step because their

This silence could, if prolonged, appear on the one hand as an admission and on the other hand as validation or justification of the measures taken by the decree of May 27, 1974 against the entire Congregation. These measures, which the experience of the following months has shown to be contrary to the “good” and to the “peace” invoked as the sole reason stated in the decree.

At the same time, the Sisters attempted a final intervention with Mother Marie-Rose. They entrusted the writing of this to Mother Anne-Marie. She wrote, on October 9 :

Like each of my Sisters, I received your “monition” in which you ask us to respond within two weeks. Before doing so, I hesitated a lot, because we know that the “game is up”, so why answer? On the other hand, not to answer would seem

to acknowledge our wrongs and prove you right, so I will answer, but my answer will be hard. It will appear to you, once again, as an act of revolt, of rebellion, of spite... what do I know? Whereas it is only a cry of suffering. Indeed, you would need a mother's guts and a mother's heart to understand the drama we are living and the torture that you and your council have inflicted on our consciences. But your conscience is at peace, you do not ask yourself any questions about us, we no longer exist for you. (...) We are mocked on all sides; our souls and our eternity are played with. While you all have on your lips only the words "respect for the human person, recognition of his dignity, openness to others, dialogue, understanding...", to those of your Sisters who have written to you and begged you, for months, not to reject them and to address their drama of conscience, you have not answered a single personal letter, you have not made a single visit. You have sent only impersonal letters, dictated, the response of an administrator to the administered. (...)

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Why, Mother, would you not instead agree to recognize us or have us recognized, with the possibility of recruitment, as an independent, even autonomous branch of the Congregation? What harm would you do to the Church? (...) You have thus put us in a situation of daily disobedience or of betraying our faith or of leaving religious life.

(...) Our only crime is to want to remain faithful to the traditional liturgy, to teach the traditional catechism, to refuse co-education, equivocation in dress, contracts (...).

May those who took the initiative of our rejection take responsibility for it before God, before the Church and before the Congregation! For us, we will continue to pray for and

with those who cause us so much suffering. We remain and will remain faithful to the Church and to Saint Dominic. The General Administrator did not respond personally to this letter any more than to the previous ones. But the monitions continued to be addressed to the Sisters according to the gradation foreseen by canon law. On October 2, November 4, 1975, and November 24, they asked the same fundamental question: Are you determined to obey the government of the Congregation appointed by the Sacred Congregation of Religious?

The Sisters took the trouble to respond to each of these letters, first personally and then as a group. The reading of these letters gives an idea of the state of mind in which they were. Here are some large excerpts:

My Mother," wrote one of them on October 16, 1975, "I have come to answer your monition of October 2, 1975, received on October 7, with simplicity and confidence in your goodness, and I will try to express my thoughts to you. (...)

You ask me to obey the "decisions of the government". What is the "government of the Congregation"? When we talk to you, you retreat behind the bishops and Father Decabooter; and when we meet with our bishops, they put forward the mother administrator of the Congregation and her advisors.

Who governs the Congregation?

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The truth is that it is not a Superior General and a Council elected according to our Constitutions. We have constitutions approved by the Holy See; they are a guarantee and a protection for us. That is why in

withdrawing to Fanjeaux I did not act in disobedience to the government. You may ask why I did not opt in this way a year ago. Simply because I hoped for a general chapter that I thought would be immediate, that would have taken into consideration the interests of each of us.

However, this is not the case. The General Chapter has been postponed indefinitely. And what about our interests which are the good of souls in our work of teaching and education? To ensure this, I had asked you to accept me in a homogeneous community in which we would provide the children with a Christian education and teaching in accordance with the Tradition of the Church. But this is not the case! You appointed me to Sète.

In conscience, I cannot agree to teach children one thing and let them practice the opposite. Lex orandi, lex credendi. The law of faith and the law of prayer are intimately linked. How can one believe in a point of the Creed without practicing it and making it live?

On January 18, 1976, Mother Marie-Rose communicated to the Sisters the decisions of the Sacred Congregation for Religious: At the express invitation of the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, it is my duty to communicate the following:

After having examined your situation with great attention in its Congress of January 9, 1976, this dicastery had to note that the act of characterized disobedience that you have made would be punishable by a decree of resignation. However, in order to give you the opportunity to recover, it has limited itself to registering that you have placed yourself in the

i of the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus of Fanjeaux, Mother Simoulin's collection, file "Our religious drama".
Letter from Sister Monique

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conditions indicated in canon 644, § 1, with the consequences provided for by the law, which this condition entails.

I remind you that this situation does not exempt you from the obligations of the Rule and the vows, and that you must return to the institute without delay, as the Church still gives you the possibility of doing, if you are animated by a feeling of sincere repentance. (Cf. canon 645)

I ask the Lord to help you with his light and strength to accomplish his will and, with this hope, I repeat the assurance of my dedication.

Immediately contesting the sanction which seemed to strike them according to canons 644 and 645 of Church law, the Sisters once again replied to Mother Marie-Rose on February 4: The Sisters of the Congregation of the Dominican Teaching Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus of Toulouse, grouped together de facto in Fanjeaux since July 1, 1975, acknowledge receipt of the letter sent on January 18, 1976, by Mother Marie-Rose Tassy, with acknowledgement of receipt, to each of the perpetually professed Sisters.

They respectfully express their surprise that a text emanating from the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes and concerning them was not addressed directly to them and that a photocopy of this document was not communicated to them - which is contrary to law.

They also refuse to see their situation of fait assimilated to that defined in articles 644 and 645 of canon law. In fact, the fundamental intention which motivated and justified their “illegitimate departure”, far from being an apostasy from religious life, is on their part a deliberate will for each of them to be faithful to the faith of their baptism and to the commitments of their religious profession. Far from wanting to reject “the obligations of the Rule and the vows”, it is in the desire to be more faithful to them that they founded a community of stricter observance in Fanjeaux.

None of them has contracted a civil marriage or accepted a secular job. (...)

Fugitive, they are, yes, but in the way that Our Lord himself had faith forty days in the desert...

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Rupture or fidelity,

It is to better listen to him, to better pray and to better serve the children.

Have we ever seen Sisters called “fugitives” who inform their Congregation of the date and place chosen for their flight, who also inform the local bishop and who settle down thanks, in part, to the funds generously lent by their own Congregation?

In addition to the common letter, each of the Sisters once again took the time to respond personally to the Mother Administrator.

My mother,

Is it really necessary that I write to you? Is it useful?

If I decide to do this, it's because I don't want to not have done everything I could to make the light happen.

Explain to me, Mother, how the Church can reject from her bosom, throw out, those who only want to continue to live (...) according to the teaching given by the Church for twenty centuries and which has given so many saints!

Explain to me why, apparently, the Church no longer accepts those who want only one thing: to live as generously as possible, in accordance with the Gospel and the Tradition of the Church. How is this a serious fault? What is there to sin about? (...)

As you know, I do not want to leave the Congregation.

As you know, if I am in Fanjeaux, it is only because, unless I was unfaithful to what my conscience dictated and put myself in a state of serious sin, I could not do otherwise.

As you know, if you had left us, as we asked, a house with the means to live in fidelity to my convictions, I would have been there.

Archives of the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus of Fanje-le-Mane Simoulin, file "Our religious drama". Letter from Loulin, February 2, 1976.

aux, mother Claude's fund*.

Lu scission

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In another style, Mother Marie-Rachel Mottet, already elderly at the time of this correspondence, wrote ingenuously After a careful reading of the texts of canon law for religious that

you point out to us, I do not see very well, Mother, in what they concern us. I do not live in concubinage, by the grace of God, nor do I engage in any commercial activity or business. These are the two points to which the texts refer to the religious in our situation of having. I have not abandoned my religious life, nor my constitutions, nor the work of teaching, nor my prayers of the Rule. On the contrary, I joined the de facto grouping of Fangeaux to safeguard my religious life and its apostolic work. When I read the history of the Order of Friars Preachers, one can see that the Order of the Friars was formed inside the Order of the Friars, less autonomous, desiring to preserve the primitive Regula or to return to it if they had already departed from it, and, for one word or another, some of the letters, e, t were lost or the Rule had become altered. By the request of Blessed Raymond of Capua, in the 14th century in Padua, a Congregation of and the Dore mentioned in its members Father Chardon

More soberly and quickly, Sister Marie-Louis Bareyre writes a few lines:

My mother,

My answer to your last letter is very simple and clear: I persevere in the love of Tradition and the taste of faith. In doing so, I am neither heretical, nor apostate, nor schismatic, but quite the opposite. (...)

I want to cling only to the Lord in order to faithfully accomplish, to the end, all his will.

A final monition dated March 12, 1976, announced the last stage of the process. On June 7, 1976, the Sisters were dispensed from their vows by the Sacred Congregation for

Religious, in the name of canon 640. What was really going on?

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It is necessary to stop for a moment on this canonical decision in order to measure its exact scope. A first observation is obvious from the documents available to the historian: the two parties, that of the Sisters and that of the authority that condemned them, do not seem to be on the same ground. On the one hand, the Sisters ask a fundamental question which involves their fidelity to the constitutions of the Congregation and to the answer of which they subordinate their obedience to the government of the Congregation. On the other hand, the authority seems to take into consideration only the final act of disobedience, separated from its reasons for being, and, limited to the strict framework of canon law, giving the impression of condemning the Sisters.

The reflection on the canonical scope of the Roman interventions is a bit austere. It is nevertheless necessary for those who want to understand the drama that was being played out for the Sisters gathered in Fanjeaux.

Elements for a Canonical Judgment 33 An Inducement Without Legal Effect

From a purely canonical point of view, the document of the Sacred Congregation of Religious of June 7, 1976, given to each of the Sisters of Fanjeaux, is in fact a personal rescript which, relying on canon 640 of the Code of Canon Law, grants an inducement of secularization which would have been requested. It is not, therefore, a decree of condemnation, which, moreover, should come from the

prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Religious and not from the simple secretary. It is very important in law

33 - This canonical analysis was carried out with the advice and clarification of a priest of the Priestly Fraternity of St. Pius X who for many years was a professor of canon law at the Seminary of Ecône. The complete document which allows us to arrive at the conclusions which we present here in a condensed form in order to make it easier to read, can be found in the appendix of the book.

to distinguish the rescript from the decree which are two distinct canonical entities.

The rescripts of Roman congregations are analyzed according to the Code of Canon Law which specifies the rules concerning them (canons 36 to 62). Rescripts are means of granting favors or dispensations that have been requested by or on behalf of the interested parties. The inducement of secularization, on the other hand, is a favor granted to a religious who legitimately wishes to leave her religious institute. The principal effect of this inducement is given in canon 640, § 1: the Sister no longer belongs canonically to the religious institute in which she had made her perpetual vows. The inducement of secularization also involves the lifting of all the public vows of the religious.

The discipline of the Church requires that the religious first examine the serious reason for making such a request. At the moment when the inducement of secularization is given to the nun, she can still refuse it; it is her acceptance that will give it full value.

The Church shows her disfavor for secularization by allowing the religious to refuse it, even when the Holy See has granted it, the Superior General has written the executory

decree, and the local Superior notifies the person concerned. There is still time for him to get his act together and preserve the benefits of his religious life. (...) But suppose a religious refuses the inducement presented to him and, six months later, insists on leaving. If there has been a true renunciation of the inducement, accepted by the superior, he cannot leave the religious state without a new inducement 34 .

Moreover, canon 37 of the 1917 Code of Canon Law specifies that the grace granted by the rescript may not be used for any other purpose.

34 - Raoul Naz, *Traité de droit canonique*, 1.1, n°907, Lctouoy, 1948.

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by the one in whose favour it has been granted. The new code of 1983 has sought to clarify this point further in canon 71 :

No one is required to use a rescript granted in his or her own favor, unless it is otherwise granted by virtue of a canonical obligation.

In 1976, the Sisters were thus granted an inducement of secularization which they had not requested. It would be quite illusory to want to believe that the “inducement of absence” which they had requested on the advice of Father Dulac and which the Sacred Congregation of Religious had not wanted to concede in illo tempore could be equated with a request for secularization.

Who claimed this inducement for the Sisters? That is the mystery. One of the Fanjeaux nuns involved testified in January 2016:

We were told (then) that it was the Congregation that had requested that we be relieved of our vows - can we think that this could be considered as equivalent to a personal request?

Another possibility - perhaps a little rash - comes to mind: that of a diocesan bishop hoping to obtain in this way what he could not otherwise obtain: the neutralization of the resistance of the Sisters to diocesan pastoral innovations in education.

Whatever the case, it is absolutely certain that the Sisters of Fanjeaux did not accept to benefit from such an inducement. It is not difficult to prove that, by their writings, their words, their attitudes, both at the time of receiving this inducement and afterwards, they sufficiently manifested their intention not to benefit from it. It must therefore be concluded that the inducement of secularization is null and void because of the beneficiary's formal and canonical non-acceptance.

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The split

No trace of a canonical reference

In no way, therefore, did the Sacred Congregation of Religious dismiss the Sisters from their Congregation when they alone had the juridical capacity to do so. For in religious congregations of pontifical right for perpetually vowed religious, dismissal can only be decided by the Holy See (canon 650, § 2, 2°), and not by the Superior General,

which is recalled in article 217 of the constitutions of the Congregation.

Moreover, the situation of the Sisters of Fanjeaux in July 1976 did not fall into the category of the three extremely precise and serious cases in which dismissal applies ipso facto, that is, in which the simple canonical finding of the offence entails the necessary dismissal of the religious (canon 646) - namely, public apostasy from the Catholic faith. It must be concluded that, although the sisters were threatened several times, they were never dismissed from their Congregation by a canonical act. And that is why the nuns concerned at the time (many of whom are still living at the time of writing) still belong to the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus.

Thus, the study of the canon law in force allows us to affirm that this conclusion is not a probable opinion that we would emphasize here, but a canonical certainty.

The error of the bishop of Carcassonne

Finally, contrary to the rash assertion of Bishop Pierre-Marie Puech of Carcassonne in 1981,³⁵ the Pope, then Paul VI, never intervened to impose a dispensation of vows on the Sisters of Fanjeaux. In law, the pope can, of course, grant dispensation from all the vows of the sisters.

35-Cf. note⁴⁴ p. 355.

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blics, even solemn ones. He could even impose it in spite of the will of the subject for an extraordinarily grave cause concerning the common good of the Church; this is the common opinion. He would then have to act by a special motu proprio decree, because, according to the common law

of religious, a religious not canonically dismissed can never be dispensed from his public vows without having made a request for it or, at least, without having formally accepted this dispensation. An inducement of forced secularization is an entity that is canonically non-existent even in the new legislation of the Church (1983 code). The bishop of Carcassonne has simply taken his desires for a reality, an attitude that does not seem - to say the least - very canonical... - very canonical...

The Sisters present in July 1976 in Fanjeaux having never been dismissed from their Congregation as explained above, and the Pope having never imposed a dispensation, their vows remain valid even after the events of June 1976.

The conclusion of the canonist

This is what allows us to conclude with certainty:

All these elements being considered both in law and in fact, it is necessary to declare with certainty that canonically the professed Sisters of the Congregation of the Dominican Teaching Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus of Toulouse, who received on June 7, 1976 the above-mentioned rescript of the Sacred Congregation of Religious, still belong to this religious institute and are still bound by their public vows of religion pronounced in this same institute 36 .

36 - We reproduce here the conclusion of the in-depth study, which we have placed in an appendix. This analysis is also valid for the Sisters of Brignoles, who were in the same way "relieved of their vows" on May 24, 1975, as we have related on p. 309.

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The response of the Sisters of Fanjeaux

When they received the rescript, the Sisters were not indifferent to the slippage which linked the fault to a sanction whose gravity the Sacred Congregation seemed to want to attenuate by a canonical pirouette. They refused this apparent kindness which left a doubt about the nature of the fault, as they had already declared six months earlier when they were threatened with dismissal:

My mother,

My answer to your registered letter 37 received on January 21 will be brief; it will be limited to sharing with you the few remarks that have arisen from its reading and to asking a few questions. (...) You speak about us, about me, of “characterized disobedience” which would be “liable to resignation”.

Here I do not understand very well: either I have committed an act of “characterized disobedience” or I have not. And consequently: either the sentence is the planned resignation decree, or there is no sentence at all 38 .

At the very least, if one went by the official documents, it was clear that what appeared to be a sanction was not explicitly linked to any precisely described fault. Everyone understood that the refusal of the 1975 obediences was assimilated to a serious fault of disobedience, but the official texts left a doubt since the apparent sanction, which could lead one to believe that it was a dismissal, seemed in a subliminal way to be linked to other faults touching the faith.

This is how the Sisters understood the matter: none of them were fooled by the motives. And when some of them wrote to the General Administrator that “they had not left with a

man,” it is obvious that the tone was ironic. It was simply emphasizing

37 - Letter quoted on p. 330.

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Rupture or fideht.

They were concerned about the imprecise nature of the official documents, which they felt concealed a real lack of faith:

No, Mother, I am neither an apostate from the religious life nor a fugitive. Therefore, I am not subject to canons 644-645 of canon law.

Did she leave the Congregation illegitimately on July 1, 1975? If one wishes, but pointing out that it was after having requested from you and your council, and on several occasions, the possibility of constituting with the Sisters who shared the same suffering and the same demands, a homogeneous community faithful to the Tradition of the Church, according to the legitimate pluralism conceded by Rome at the time of my deposition in June 1974, a deposition never justified.

We thought then that the proposal of Rome was legitimate and would be applied, and that is why we did not follow our Sisters of Saint-Pré whose demands we share. We wanted to obey the orders of your council for a year. We did not expect that one day we would no longer be able to obey orders that would violate our faith as baptized women and our conscience as religious.

Who, for a long time bent on my destruction, wanted our rejection? Only God knows and only he will judge. It is not

my business. But may God preserve my heart from hatred and bitterness, may he keep me all to himself in the humble service of the children of France. I ask him faithfully every day 3 '...

This letter, like many of those we have already quoted, speaks of the real reason for the sanction, or more precisely of the opposition of the Sisters to the authorities of the Congregation which condemned them. It is twofold: fidelity to the Constitutions and fidelity to the Mass of Saint Pius V.

Fidelity to the Constitutions and to the Mass was in fact the motive clearly expressed by the Sisters when they asked to be grouped in a homogeneous house. In order to vary the testimonies

39 - Mother's letter

-Marie Simoulin to Mother Marie-Rose Tassy, February 4, 1976.

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Usassion^ _

Here is what Mother Magdeleine de Jesus Juès wrote to ^^arie-Rose at Pentecost 1975:

My Most Reverend Mother,

I am sending you here the answer I promised you... I delayed sending it to you because I wanted to reflect, consult, pray, and reread the Roman documents concerning the present state of our unfortunate Congregation, especially the decrees of the Sacred Congregation of Religious of January 11 and May 27, 1974. The result of my personal deliberations is the following: as long as the General

Chapter has not pronounced itself on possible modifications of our constitutions, such as they were adopted during the last chapters and approved by the Holy See, I believe I am obliged by my vow of obedience to strictly respect these constitutions. The innovations that are being introduced here and there and others that are being announced and prepared seem to me to be contrary to this obligation. Consequently, I regret that I cannot accept the employment you have offered me in the house of Grasse - or in any other you may offer me - as long as I do not have the assurance that the prescriptions and customs observed up to now in all our houses will be just as faithfully observed in the one to which you will decide to send me.

On October 18, 1975, it took up the same idea, adding an explicit mention of the Tridentine Mass:

I did not intend to reply to the monition you sent us, thinking that it would be of no use, as our fate was probably already decided. But I learn that the communities have received from you (and I am surprised that we who are concerned have not had it) communication of a Roman document indicating the measures to be taken with regard to us, on which it is specified that the answers will be attached to the report that you must send to the Sacred Congregation... I have come to ask you to attach my letter of Pentecost, of which I am sending you a copy. This letter has remained without any response from you, nor have you given me any, either orally or in writing, to the requests I had made of you. (...)

Assuming that you don't think you should recognize as still part of the Congregation, and that you

have the right to exclude them, the Sisters whom you judge to be disobedient, because of their attachment to the Mass

of St. Pius V, even though the bull Quo Primum Tempore assures them of the contrary, you can at least seek to preserve for them an officially religious status, and once again, I urge you to have it granted. (...)

But if instead you take the terrible responsibility of depriving us of it, I shall, for the peace of my conscience, rather do without it than without the religious security of which you have given me no guarantee and which I find here.

On February 2, 1976, the message was still clear:

Mother, in response to your letter of January 18, I come to you very humbly to explain some of the reasons that made it my duty to join the Sisters who have gathered here. (...)

These reasons, which are still as compelling as ever, stem from the fact that I had no other possibility of ensuring for myself, in particular, a daily Mass such that it could only be celebrated by a priest who believed in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, not just “when he is received,” as we were once told in a community Mass; where I could give the Blessed Sacrament the marks of adoration that I believe I should continue to give to him, especially in my way of receiving Communion; in which I can participate without being led to pronounce words whose translation betrays the authentic text and does not express the whole faith, and to feel remorse, or to refrain from doing so and then cause embarrassment if not scandal to others; without having to participate or to abstain, always with the same consequences, from a kind of mass like the one that was announced on a convocation of a meeting of nuns of the diocese of Nice, last spring, where the “Eucharist” was to take place throughout the day.

I also wanted to preserve the benefit of the recitation of the Office in Latin, which was not to be changed without a decision of the General Chapter.

Moreover, I no longer had the assurance that this general chapter would be held according to the norms of our constitutions since its preparation was tainted by arbitrariness, due to the deposition of

of the legitimate council, at the request of the Archbishop of Toulouse, outside the canonical rules, the only guarantee of the right of persons, as the Holy Father declared not long ago when speaking of canon law.

I do not want to believe that, at a time when the Church has just canonized English saints for their fidelity to the traditional faith, the representatives of her authority can reproach us for our concern to remain faithful to the expression of the same faith. And I want to hope that we will at least be granted the recognition of a legitimate separation, which is authorized, for example, for the good of spouses and children, when disagreement no longer allows cohabitation without serious damage to the former and to the education of the latter: this can be applied to the work of formation that we have to do in common.

None of these letters received an answer on the merits, even though they seriously raised the problem of the vow of obedience expressed in the following way:

I, X..., in religion Sister X..., make profession and promise obedience to God, to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to St. Dominic, to St. Catherine of Siena, and to you, Mother..., Prioress General of the Congregation of the Dominican Teaching Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus, as well as to those who will succeed you in this office, committing myself to obey,

according to the Rule of St. Augustine and the Constitutions, until death.

In this case, the dismissal of the Sisters could not be considered to be based on “serious external causes linked to incorrigibility” if the Sisters - as they kept repeating - were only asking to be able to respect the Constitutions of the Congregation in force at the time of the facts as well as the purpose of the Institute.

Canon 487 defines the religious state in the following terms:

One must hold in high esteem the religious state, that is to say a stable way of living together, by which the faithful, in addition to the common precepts, impose upon themselves the obligation to practice

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the evangelical counsels through the three vows of obedience, chastity and poverty.

And Canon 593 of the 1917 Code states:

Each and every religious, superiors as well as subjects, must not only fulfill fully and faithfully the vows they have made, but also order their lives in conformity with the Rule and Constitutions of their own religion, and in this way tend to the perfection of their state.

In accordance with this definition, fidelity to the Constitutions of the Congregation as well as absolute respect for the vows taken guided the attitude of the Sisters, so that the authoritarian lifting of the vows cannot be considered as resting on a valid motive in law as well as in

the light of experience, unless the competent authority took the time to respond to their questions and concerns, proving to them in a clear manner that their way of seeing things was not right.

The Sisters themselves, considering that their condemnation was based implicitly on accusations not strictly related to discipline but to faith and religious state, appealed to Rome to have these accusations clarified. We remember their text⁴⁰, asking Rome for justice for the vague and serious allegations made by Father Decabooter during his canonical visit:

The reason for [his] refusal [to preside over the chapter] is the following: he had, he said, heard from some of us, inadmissible remarks concerning the French episcopate, considered - by us - as heretical, concerning the Holy See and even the person of the Supreme Pontiff. These global and vague allegations, the credit which the dicastery seems to have given them and the consequences they have had are too serious for us to bear even the slightest suspicion. That is why we have taken the decision to

i - See p. 327.

Vf

submit this case to the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith for examination.

Together with the desire to keep the Mass tridentinc, this claim normally placed the opposition not on the ground of strict religious discipline which sought to “remove” from religious obedience” (canon 644), but on that of faith if one considers the classic definition of this virtue: “certain adherence of the intelligence to the revealed truths”, among which are the dogmas concerning the sacrament of the

Eucharist and the sacrifice of the Mass, as well as that of the authority of the hierarchy of the Church.⁴¹

Logically, the case of the Sisters could have been transferred from the competence of the Sacred Congregation for Religious to that of the Holy Office. In fact, according to the 1917 Code, the Sacred Congregation for Religious exercised its competence in accordance with the provisions of canon 251, the first paragraph of which states that

The Congregation responsible for the affairs of religious is exclusively competent for all that concerns the direction, discipline, studies, goods and privileges of religious of both sexes, whether solemnly or simply vowed, and also of persons who, although not vowed, live in common in the manner of religious; likewise of secular Third Orders, except for the right of the Sacred Congregation to propagate.

41 - It can be useful to recall that the second condition of the V Wm has determined. a ampos of all the liturgical rites then approved, that the Ecumenical Council - wishes to practice them

It is also known that a new Roman rite was promulgated after the apostolic constitution of Paul VI, rite which was thereafter of general use. But the old liturgy remained in force, and was approved by the sovereign pontiff. It was in the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council that the 1962 edition of the Missale Romanum and the Roman Breviary were promulgated.

Pontificum of Pope Benedict XVI on July 7, 2007. paragraph 1

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The second paragraph states:

Consequently, while reserving to the courts the care of matters to be dealt with judicially, and while respecting the particular competence of the Holy Office and of the Congregation of the Council in matters which concern them, the Sacred Congregation of Religious decides all matters within its competence, in the line of discipline (...)

For its part, canon 247 recalls that questions of faith fall under the competence of the Holy Office. We must return here to the text of the Sisters addressed to Mother Marie-Rose on February 4, 1976⁴² :

If the Congregation had wanted it, we would not have deserted our houses. It is because the conditions imposed on our life of faith and our religious life were incompatible with our faith and our conception of the demands of religious life that we had to withdraw to Fanjeaux, after having begged the provisional government of our Congregation for a long time and often to grant us one or two houses, and to have us recognized as an autonomous house in the Congregation. It was your advice, Mother, that morally obliged us to gather here - and you know that our only desire is to remain from and in the Congregation. Will we wait in vain for the maternal solicitude of the Church?

Only a doctrinal reason of particular gravity could justify the dismissal of the Dominican Sisters. For it is always on the level of faith and fidelity to the Constitutions that the Sisters asked to be heard. Under these conditions, it is difficult to understand how the Sacred Congregation of Religious could legitimately exercise its competence to the detriment of that of the Holy Office, or at the very least without first obtaining its opinion.

If we try to understand the whole legal aspect of this painful question, and after having agreed that the authorities who

42 - Of which the beginning ;

cited at 331.

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Since the judges who sanctioned the Sisters deliberately chose to circumscribe the problem to the act of disobedience constituted by the refusal to accept the obediences of 1975, detaching it absolutely from the context that caused it and from the explanations that the Sisters tried to give, there remains a point to be raised, surprising with regard to not only canonical, but even simply natural law: that which the accused has to defend himself, and for that to know exactly the reasons for his condemnation as well as the means of responding to the accusations made. Since none of the letters addressed by the Sisters to their Superior on the point of the Constitutions and the Mass received a reply, it seems possible to say that this fundamental right was set aside.

The reflection on the modalities of the condemnation cannot ignore the substance of the problem. Could the issues in dispute - Tridentine Mass and fidelity to the Constitutions - be the subject of legal claims? The Sisters obviously asked themselves this question. They could not be content to rely on their personal instincts, even if these guided their certainty.

They found in the person of Abbé Dulac, chaplain of the Carmelite convent in Draguignan and an eminent jurist, perfectly competent in canon law, a precious support.

Reading the letters he exchanged with Mother Magdeleine de Jesus Juès during those difficult months allows us to

follow the evolution of a situation that his councils wanted to maintain within the law and the strict application of religious law.

On April 28, 1975, he gave the following advice:

Taking into account the details in your letter of April 11, and others given to me in a letter from Mother Anne-Marie, dated April 15, I believe I must clarify, complete, and, in

changes affecting important points of your constitutions or your apostolate. So: resist.

- But resist inside your institute.
- For this resistance to be both effective and legal, it is necessary to :
 - As much as it will be possible to you, to associate to several with the same goal and with identical means;
 - Do not disperse or individualize your claims at the outset: for example: Mass, office, chaplain, catechism, etc... But to bring everything back to unity, that is to say: fidelity to your constitutions, approved by the Holy See, constitutions which found and legitimize the present claims.
 - To maintain, with all the juridical tradition of the Church and the uninterrupted practice of all religious institutes in all centuries, that only the General Chapter, held exactly according to the prescriptions of the Code and the Constitutions, is qualified to modify this or that point of the Constitutions or the Customary. The control of the Holy See can only come after the decisions of the Chapter.
 - Any decision or proposal of the administrator or the assistant which would be undertaken before the Chapter is

held against the prescriptions of the Constitutions and the Customary. The powers conferred on these two persons by the decree of the Sacred Congregation of Religious dated May 27, 1974 are powers limited to the ordinary government of your Congregation according to the Rules of the Congregation as defined in the last General Chapter.

- From what you have written to me, Sister, from what you have said and from what I learn from Mother Anne-Marie's letters, it appears to me that the administrator is either overstepping her authority, or is not guaranteeing your rights by failing to answer the questions you have asked her in this regard.

- Consequently: you cannot make commitments by accepting for the 1975-1976 school year

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a job that you feel you can only do by violating the requirements of the constitutions.

- I suggest that you write a letter to the administrator that
- will declare your firm intention to remain in the institute;
- but also your equally firm resolution to remain faithful to your constitutions.

On May 7, 1975, in view of the agreement that the administrator had given to the search for a bishop who would accept the Sisters as they were for a foundation in his diocese, he gave the following advice

I confirm the advice I gave you in answer to your question: you must join the group that is gathering around Mother Anne-Marie since it seems to be recognized by the new

government. Thus, both dissidence and the unconditional rallying of those who accept the new regime as if it were indisputable would be avoided.

Now it is, in my eyes, more than questionable. Only this questioning should have been done within a legal process [that Rome would have admitted] instead of a refusal that was introduced in fact by the subordinates. (...) Therefore: remain a Dominican of the Holy Name of Jesus, and all the more so when the institute wants to modify these constitutions and its customs. You, remain faithful to the interior. If the bishop of Carcassonne accepts the foundation, the difficulty should be solved. If he refuses, you will have to look elsewhere (Chartres? Dax?) And as long as you have not found a place, the new government is obliged to assure you all a living. And that is until the General Chapter is held. I believe that the new prefect of the Congregation of Religious, Cardinal Tabera, will approve this position.

On May 14, he clarified his thoughts:

I can't give you anything but "orientations".

They are in line with the advice I have given you in recent weeks by letter and by phone. Here they are:

- Do not do anything on your own that expresses, in words, your leaving the Congregation.

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- Ask Rome for an inducement "of absence", while waiting, you say in the request, for the General Chapter to have legally ruled on the reforms of structures which, in the eyes of your advisors, exceed the powers of an administrator.

- At the request of an inducement, you will attach a detailed statement of these structural reforms, asking the Sacred Congregation of Religious and the Holy Office (because of the doctrinal-moral aspect of these reforms) to pronounce on the merits of your refusal.

- Since, during this consultation in the form of these two organs of the Holy See, nothing can be legally decided either by the administrator or by the bishops, you can, at the same time, refuse the “obediences” without acting in rebellion.

- As, on the other hand, the “resistant” women had to live somewhere, once they had their “absence” permit, they chose to reside in Fanjeaux and to carry out their work there, but it would have to be in a precarious way: “because you have to live”. Unless, by order of the Sacred Congregation of Religious, the administrator assumes your subsistence.

I do not hide the difficulties of this solution, but it allows you to “save time”, Rome will be long in responding - especially the Holy Office - and you will have avoided the disastrous and guilty determination to leave the Institute before having resisted on the spot and in time.

As the history of events has shown, the Sisters followed exactly the advice of Father Dulac. On July 1, 1975, all of them requested permission to be absent. In reply, the Sacred Congregation of Religious postponed the examination of the substantive questions until later because of “the absence of Monsignor the Secretary for several weeks”⁴³ and referred to the decision of the administrator the authorization of absence - which she refused.

Paradoxically, the Sisters missed the precious support of this expert canonist at the most painful moment of their

struggle.

43 - Letter of the Sacred Congregation of Religious, July 22, 1975, Prot. n° 01355/54.

U split

In September 1975, when the difficulties" inâpeaeai Usir full measure, Mother Anne-Marie had decided iamuya need Sisters in Ecône, in the seminary that Archbishop Lefebvre vjaair found it in Switzerland, in order to assume an office of buandes"-nu would relieve the prelate of these material questions. The affair atuurae in itself in view of so many crucial debates, prwnaia a violent reaction of Father Dulac. He exposed his meonaserement to Mother Magdeleine de Jésus in a letter of 5 oaaasc My Sister,

The advice that you wanted to ask me at the most painful times of your religious life makes it my duty to write you this letter today.

An event has just occurred that I was forced not to want to imagine: in a letter that I received here on September 26, Mother Anne-Marie informed me that she had authorized two Sisters of your community to join Ecône to keep the seminarians' linen room. I answered her the same day that if she did not immediately withdraw this authorization, I would withdraw the commitment I had made to advise you and defend you. That, consequently, I retracted everything I had said and written in view of this defense and which had been said and written only in a very precise hypothesis, namely: that you would remain in the Congregation of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus, strictly faithful to a profession made according to the constitutions, the customs, and a well determined indolcs propria (...)

For that, it was necessary to keep you away from any assimilation, any possible amalgamation to any community. This, for the moral and psychological side of your position. As for the “juridical” side, there was only one possible way: to defend yourselves from the accusation of disobeying the administrator, to demonstrate that Mother Anne-Marie was always, in law, the prioress general; that the decree of May 1974 is not only unjust, but illegal. At the same time, the administrator had only a supposed authority, from which it was permitted to evade without being rebels. You only resisted. And you existed “within the law”, strong of the law of the Church itself, which you invoked.

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Certainly, I repeat, this position was difficult, but it was the only one, from the moment you refused to leave your institute: an exit that has a very precise name: secularization, with the serious moral, juridical, human consequences that follow. (...)

Allowing two of you to go and hold the linen room of a seminar, in general, and of this seminar in particular, would make my whole argument worthless and invalid...

This long study, which is of interest to the legal historian, was not made at the time of the events by the Sisters concerned. But their conviction was very much the same as that which can be drawn from the study of canon law. One can think, moreover, that if the competent authorities in Rome were seized of a request presented in the proper form, they could only declare the nullity of the act by which the Sisters were relieved of their vows, and, consequently, that these vows are still in force.

The location in Fanjeaux

Thus, in spite of the condemnations, the Sisters decided to remain in Fanjeaux and to lead a religious life in conformity with their perpetual profession, even though they were rejected by the authority of their Congregation and by the hierarchy of the Church. Neglecting, in the urgency of the situation and in the exhaustion of a fight desperately led to obtain justice, the objurgations as well as the threats of Mgr Puech, bishop of Carcassonne, who came many times to try to reduce them to reason, the Sisters reserved their forces for the children who flocked as soon as the school year started to open.

Deprived of everything, they embarked on the adventure with the only certainty being the testimony of their conscience in favor of the truth they loved above all else. The Congregation had not let them leave with nothing. In accordance with canon law, the Sisters were allowed to take back their trousseau and received financial assistance from the General Administrator. The only precise document on the subject is a letter from Mother Marie-Rose, dated March 8, 1975, in which she describes a little of the help offered:

For the 2CV, the bedding, the furniture and especially for the family goods of the Sisters, we will study the question with Mother Marie-Joseph. I can already reassure you by saying that we will not leave you in the lurch, but that we will help you as much as possible.

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A pamphlet written by friends tried to attract donations that they did not even think about. In the title, a quotation from

Father Calmel gave the spirit of the work that was being done in solitude:

Our resistance will be all the more firm as the heavenly goods we maintain will be first of all the food of our thought and of our soul.

It informed of the coming to Fanjeaux, on September 8, of Bishop Lefebvre, the bishop who rebelled against the new orientations of the Church hierarchy and who had just moved the crowds during his visit to Lille. Before announcing that there would be two veils and five postulants in 1976, the prospectus presented a quick overview of the situation:

In 1975, Dominican teaching sisters, driven out of their Congregation, opened a school in a state of destitution. The house is now full of students, religious vocations are pouring in, should the students be sent away to receive the postulants, or should the postulants be kept waiting? (...)

We need a lot of generosity, no matter how small. The burden is overwhelming: we have nothing. We thank you with all our heart.

In fact, on September 8, 1976, Archbishop Lefebvre was in Fanjeaux. On June 18, 1977, he returned there for a confirmation ceremony during which he pronounced these words:

Your example is a great encouragement to all... You are a great encouragement for us... (...) Quid petis ad Ecclesiam Dei? Fidem! Faith gives us eternal life; faith to go to eternal life. Our life is made to last forever: an eternal life... Yes, we want the honor of Jesus Christ and we will fight for it. We will do everything we can. Everything is his, everything belongs to him and everything must be under his rule... A deep faith,

an absolute faith, a faith that does not compromise... As the martyrs shed their blood to affirm the kingship of Christ, we must be ready to give our lives...

The location in Fanjeaux

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Many priests, friends of Father Choulot, the dean of Nègrepelisse, had shown their support for Mother Anne-Marie. One of them, Father Raynal, the parish priest of Fonneuve, learning of her difficulties, offered her a house in Fanjeaux: La Clarté-Dieu, which belonged to an old lady, M^{lle} Garcin. Mother Anne-Marie sought benefactors to acquire this house as a life annuity. Many responded to her appeal. And on July 2, the Brunet family's faithful van from Nègrepelisse arrived in the streets of Fanjeaux, overloaded with all the various donations of the Sisters' friends. Philippe and Daniel Nougareyde drove the vehicle which could not go all the way down the narrow streets. The moving in was long and difficult, in spite of the devotion of Mr. Brunet. It did not go unnoticed in the small village...

The local press did not remain insensitive to the installation of these Sisters, of whom a communiqué from Bishop Puech had nevertheless announced that they were no longer nuns* 4 . The n° 96 of the pé

recalls general qi of: continuation that:

Cf. Religious Week of the Diocese of Cas

Father Vesco, provincial of the domii

year, n° 9, March 19

.... the bishop of Carcasso

already, he or the provincial of Toulouse or the m: >not deemed it necessary to publish clarifications, from which i

.. . - cs 2 La Clarté-Dieu de Fanjeaux are no longer

comes, nor bookbinders, the pope having imposed upon them the dispensation of their va"-The schools opened by ell- - — ' ■■■

lique (.

And, further: "The above statement of Christians, will add three remarks - 11 is painful to see se 'jl. munities and faithful to pray nourishes faith and obedience. P ° Ur 'l Uelc

:te given to the press. But to the real schism. I invite priests, c

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riodique Sud, the weekly newspaper of Languedoc and Roussillon, published in December 1977 an astonishing article entitled: "Fanjeaux : les troupiers de Dieu. "The subtitle, even more eloquent, speaks of the "Vendée Lauragaise":

Two years ago, 750 inhabitants of Fanjeaux, in the Lauragais region, were indifferent to the installation of the first fundamentalist school in France. In this canton, which traditionally has been called the Vendée lauragaise, Saint Dominique triumphed over a famous Cathar "perfect" Guillebert de Castres during the Albigensian crusade. Since then, the village has put all its ardor into celebrating the memory of the holy inquisitor. So, when in July 1975, a rich old lady offered her unoccupied house to the Dominican

nuns who had been rejected from their Order for their traditionalism, they jumped at the opportunity to get closer to the sacred places where the spirit of the saint is supposed to still blow...

"We shuddered a little when we learned that fundamentalists were going to come and settle in Fanjeaux," says Patrick, the only clerk of the village notary. "But we didn't really move. There weren't many of us who felt concerned. "Everything went smoothly: at the beginning a priest arrived, Monsignor Parolek, the first chaplain of the traditional community. He was a holy man, and not a proud one: he spent his days in the bar, buying drinks for anyone who wanted to have a drink with him. However, when the conversation turned to politics, he had a funny way of taking out his lighter and carrying it mechanically, lit, a few centimeters from the chin of his interlocutor. But with the help of aperitifs and half-drinks, he soon had himself adopted by the inhabitants of the village and in his wake, 17 nuns settled at the Clarté-Dieu house. In June 1976, the bishopric of Carcassonne informed the nuns that a decree of the Church hierarchy had reduced them to a lay state. They ignored the decree and continued to wear the white habit of the Order of Saint Dominic. On September 8, Archbishop Lefebvre presided at the taking of the veil by about twenty novices. Today, in Fanjeaux, 42 fundamentalist sisters teach 100 girls and 27 boys of all ages.

"We are teachers, that is our primary vocation," explains Mother Anne-Marie, the superior of the community.

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"Our goal is to save the children of France. "To achieve this goal, the Sisters did not shy away from anything: in addition to the house of La Clarté-Dieu, they built another building,

the Cammazou, at the bottom of the village, where the girls resided. The boys remained upstairs. This is normal: the education is not the same.

The tone of the article, half ironic, half aggressive, nevertheless allows one to imagine the beginnings of the small community.

An excerpt from one of the first letters to parents, written by Mother Anne-Marie in Fanjeaux on November 1, 1980, explains in a more profound way the spirit that the Sisters wanted to give to their school:

Dear parents,

On this day when the liturgy links earth to heaven even more intensely than usual and allows us, in the prayer and relative silence of the vacations, to take stock of this first month of school, I come, in the name of all my Sisters, to meet you for a few moments. (...)

You have entrusted your children to us so that we may give them a true and solid Christian culture, so that, following your lead and with you, we may open their minds, hearts and souls to the values of truth, beauty and goodness. Only God, who is the very truth, the enduring beauty, the absolute goodness, is able to fill their minds, their hearts and their souls. If your daughters do not have the desire to know and love God, if they do not have a personal, intense prayer, nourished by a continuous sacramental life, our efforts, yours and ours, will be in vain, because the culture that we want to give to your children takes its source in God and leads to him. In order to flourish, it needs to encounter a terrain that is docile and permeable to grace. All this you know and desire, do your girls really want it? Are they aware

enough to want it and not to undergo, even gently, the sacrifices that are necessary, especially at the present time?

And, in her characteristically incisive style, the Mother notes the current shortcomings:

What can we say about these first weeks of school? Many things and the most important are certainly the most

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unspeakable. On the whole, your girls have returned well, they show good will, the spirit is quite good, work and discipline are fairly well respected. However, piety does not suffocate the majority of the middle-aged girls and the little ones in particular, excessive delicacy and politeness do not harm the running of the house, righteousness does not run rampant everywhere, spontaneous devotion is all the more appreciated as it is parsimoniously granted, household services and order are often neglected, sacrifice, if not the spirit of sacrifice, seems, as everywhere, unfortunately, to have been banished from the social habits, personal reflection is becoming more and more rare... The book lists distributed to children in June seem to have been taken out of some school bags only on the eve of the new school year. Conclusion: too many children arrived without the requested textbooks; a lot of time wasted that more vigilance would have avoided...

The former students who knew this period remember above all the extraordinary and funny aspect of the situation. So let's let them speak, these alumni, those who were there from the beginning. Forty years after this crazy adventure, they testify:

Can we imagine a foundation without students? Where are they, in this month of July 1975? Most of them came from

l'Annonciation near Toulouse. Were they worried about the precarious conditions of their future school? Not at all! They chose enthusiastically, against all odds, thanks to a connaturality woven through the years spent at the Holy Name of Jesus, they chose to follow the Mothers who took the truest, strongest stand. Nothing else mattered but that. And from the month of July onwards, they were in a hurry to come and help them. Then, it was the discovery; rolling hills, a small deserted village, a predestined name: "La Clarté-Dieu", and nineteen Sisters in full work, but one can feel it, after the morning mass, it is a peaceful work.

We are ready for anything, like stripping "firecracker blue" doors with a blowtorch in the middle of summer heat: when everything is missing, we take care of the aesthetics! It was the building site everywhere. But in the middle we could see the sorting of books piled up, a reassuring sign: we would come here to study, to feed ourselves with truth, with the awareness of being so incomplete... the rest, the cold,

1 Fanjeaux

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the implantation it

the mice, the moves - three chapels in a few months - for the students, it was the seasoning of happiness* 5!

But no one, in the end, was really mistaken about the intimate heartbreak of the Sisters rejected from their Congregation, nor about the suffering that an apparent ecclesiastical sanction allowed to weigh - even unjustly - on them.

In somewhat similar circumstances, Father Le Floc'h

The certainty of being in the truth is the supreme strength: with it, one can bear anything.

At the height of the turmoil, Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin had written these lines:

When we appear before the Lord, I will have to answer only for myself, for my government during this torn and heart-rending time, and for the service of the souls of the children who will have been entrusted to us. It will be all very well for me to answer that I have voluntarily sacrificed the souls of children only out of obedience to such and such a diocesan director, but I will be no less guilty, and nothing and no one will then come to my aid in order to justify my complicities... In spite of all that separates us, I repeat to you, Excellency, my will to serve only Jesus Christ, even in your diocese... With the certainty that the Lord who suffered and who suffers in each one of us, through us, with us and for us, is definitively risen, I pray that this painful passion that the Church is going through at the present time will lead to the life, the light and the truth that is the Lord Jesus Christ.

We had already quoted these lines⁴⁶. Yet how can we not read them again when we recall the death of Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin, which occurred on June 16, 2015, without the canonical sanctions having been lifted? On the day of her funeral, the following June 21, the two hundred Sisters of the Congregation who had been so much a part of her life, had been invited to attend.

sion of the forty years of the Saint-Nom-de-Jésus of Fanjeaux.

46 - Cf. p. 294.

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painfully relocated to Fanjeaux in July 1975 were around his coffin to sing the verses of Dits Ira, as an echo of his thought:

Liber scriptus proferétur In quo totum continétur Unde mundus judicétur.

Judex ergo cum sedébit Quidquid latet appa rébit Nil inûltum remanébit.

The Book then will be quoted Where deeds and acts are noted For which humanity will answer.

The judge seated for the hearing will explore consciences:

Nothing will be forgotten.

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We indicate here the titles of works that allow a better understanding of the historical context in which the history of the Congregation of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus is situated. This bibliography does not claim to be exhaustive. It does not pretend to be. It has tried to give the names of works that seemed interesting, either for the quality of their documentation, or for the accuracy of the judgment proposed, or again for the knowledge of the convictions that animated persons who did not make the same choices as those of the Congregation.

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Appendix

Nature, circumstances and canonical consequences of the rescript of the Sacred Congregation of Religious of June 7, 1976, given to the nuns of the Congregation of the Dominican Teaching Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus of Toulouse living in Fanjeaux

In this paper, we will limit ourselves to examining the canonical aspect of the subject, leaving aside the consideration of higher-order motives that may have morally justified the taking of serious decisions which, while seeming to violate the letter of the law, in fact respected its spirit. Since the canonical events in question took place when the code of canon law in force was the 1917 Piobenedictine Code, it is from this code that we will argue throughout this study.

1. Reminder of the facts

At the end of June 1975, several Sisters belonging to the Congregation of the Dominican Teaching Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus of Toulouse gathered in a house located in Fanjeaux in the diocese of Carcassonne, in order to be able to live faithfully their constitutions and to have daily access to the traditional liturgy, access which was denied them.

This house did not belong to their institute, which had no house in that diocese, but on the advice of a canonist, they had asked the Sacred Congregation of Religious for an “inducement of absence” which is a permission given by the religious superiors to a member, for a serious and just cause, to remain for a certain limited time outside a house of the institute (canon 606 § 2). The Sisters, foreseeing that this absence would undoubtedly be quite long, had addressed themselves to the Sacred Congregation of Religious as the law provides (“pro absentia vero que sex menses excedat... semper Apostolica

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Sedis vacante requiritur” canon 606 § 2). The latter deferred to the decision of the General Administrator (who had been appointed by her a few months earlier to govern the religious institute) who refused to grant it.

In the months that followed, the General Administrator repeatedly warned the sisters in question that the house where they were living was not a house of the Congregation, and consequently instructed them to go to a house of the Institute, and finally warned them that their perseverance in this disobedience would constitute a serious offense.

The positions of both sides remained unchanged, and the Sacred Congregation of Religious, consulted by the General Administrator, specified that on January 9, 1976, it had been

determined that this attitude of characterized disobedience on the part of the Sisters of Fanjeaux, if it continued, would be punishable by a decree of dismissal. The Sacred Congregation of Religious limited itself for the moment to noting that the Sisters in question had placed themselves in the situation defined by canon 644 § 1:

Apostata a religione dicitur professus a votis perpetuis... simplicibus, qui e domo religiosa illégitime egrediturcum animo non redeundi'.

When the Sisters of Fanjeaux did not comply with the preceptive and repeated requests of the General Administrator, the situation continued to be deadlocked.

Finally, on July 1, 1976, a personal rescript from the Sacred Congregation of Religious, dated June 7, 1976, and signed by the Secretary of the Sacred Congregation, Bishop Mayer, was given to each of the Sisters of Fanjeaux through the intermediary of the Bishop of Carcassonne. We quote below the essential part of this decree:

Hæc Sacra Congregatio pro Religiosis (...) mature perpensis iis quæ ad casum Sororis (...) referuntur, (...) rescribendum censuit: Præfata Soror per pressens rescriptum solvitur a votis ceterisque obligationibus suæ professionis ad normam can. 640, servatis can. 551 §. 1 et can. 643 §. 2, Codicisjuris Canonici. - Dispensatio autem vim habeatadie in quo, cum ea, cujus intersit, communicata fuerit 1 2 .

1 - One calls apostate of the religious state the prey of perpetual vows... simple, which leaves illegitimately the religious house with the intention not to return.

2 - The Sacred Congregation of Religious... having carefully examined the case of Sister... has issued this rescript: the said Sister, by the present rescript, is released from the vows

and obligations of her profession according to the norm of canon 640, with due regard for canons 551 paragraph 1 and 643 paragraph 2 of the Code of Canon Law. - The dispensation will take effect on the day it is communicated to the interested party.

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Thus the Sisters could be considered as declared separated from their religious congregation and dispensed from all their vows and religious obligations by the Sacred Congregation of Religious according to canon 640 (induced secularization). The rescript recalled the duty of the religious institute to see to the restitution of any dowry paid at the time of entry into religion (canon 551 § 1) or to see to the material reintegration into the world of the former religious (canon 643 § 2).

Thereafter, to the bishop of Carcassonne who was charged with giving them the rescript and who visited them many times to induce them to abandon their religious life, the Sisters concerned constantly reaffirmed their desire to remain faithful to their Congregation and to their vows of religion. Their exactness in living them daily in the new establishment of Fanjeaux was an obvious manifestation of this desire.

In the years that followed, noting the avalanche of dubiously legal canonical sanctions falling from all sides on anyone who shared the same traditional values, no matter how high up in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the Dominican Sisters of Fanjeaux gave up any attempt to be better heard by a hierarchy which, having become deaf to their protests, was

content to repeat *wrbi et orbi* that they were henceforth mere laymen.

Thus, for example, in the *Semaine religieuse du diocèse de Carcassonne*, 114^e année, n° 9, March 1981, one can read that

the bishop of Carcassonne recalled that on three occasions he, the provincial of Toulouse, or the Master General of the Dominicans had already deemed it necessary to publish clarifications, from which it follows that the Dominican sisters who came to the Clarté-Dieu of Fanjeaux are no longer Dominicans, nor are they nuns, the pope having imposed on them the dispensation from

Today, as the Congregation of the Dominican Teaching Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus of Fanjeaux celebrates its fortieth year of existence, it seems opportune, in order to bear witness to the truth, to analyze the juridical nature of the 1976 rescript and to examine the canonical consequences of this analysis.

2. De jure: reminder of the law 2.1. Canonical nature of a rescript in itself

It is important to distinguish between a rescript and a decree, which are two very distinct canonical entities.

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The rescripts of the Roman Congregations 3 can be analyzed according to the Code of Canon Law, which devotes an entire section of its Book I to specifying the rules concerning them (*titulus iv*, canons 36 to 62). Rescripts are a means of granting graces, favors or dispensations which have been

requested by the interested parties themselves or in their name. A rescript contains an expositiva part (the request or its summary, stating the facts and the reasons) and the dispositiva part, indicating what is granted. Sentencing judgments are never given by rescript.

The decrees of the Roman congregations, on the other hand, are real laws or precepts, generally intended to complete or clarify previous laws. They are binding. The decree is always signed at least by the prefect of the Roman congregation concerned. For the rescript this is not necessary.

Finally, a property of the rescript is that, as the 1917 Code specified in canon 37, the grace granted by it may not be used by the person in whose favor it was granted. The new Code of Canon Law (1983) has since codified in canon 71 what was the practice of the Roman Curia until then on this point:

No one is required to use a rescript granted in his or her own favor, unless it is otherwise granted by virtue of a canonical obligation.

2.2 Ways of leaving a religious with perpetual vows from a religious institute of pontifical right

The Congregation of the Dominican Teaching Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus of Toulouse is, by law, a lay female religious institute of pontifical right with simple perpetual public vows.

According to the 1917 Code of Canon Law, still in force in 1976, the year of the rescript, there are two ways for a religious who has made perpetual vows in such a Congregation to leave the Congregation definitively, one legitimate, the other not. If the act of the religious at the origin of the departure from the Congregation is not in

conformity with the rights of the religious or the constitutions of her Congregation, one speaks of an illegitimate departure, if not a legitimate one.

n, Paris, Beauchesne, 1958, n° 43, n° 53-58.

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The legitimate exit

The legitimate exit is done by the inducement of secularization (denomination of the code of 1917) or inducement of exit (denomination of the new code of 1983).

The main effect of this armature is given in canon 640 § 1 :

The Sister no longer belongs canonically to the religious institute in which she had made her perpetual vows. In religious congregations of pontifical right, this inducement is granted to a perpetually professed religious who requests it, only by the Sacred Congregation of Religious (can. 638). The Church asks the religious first to examine the serious reason for making such a request.

At the moment when the secularization inducement is given to the nun, she can still renounce it: it is her acceptance that will give it full value. As Raoul Naz points out in his treatise on canon law

The Church shows her disfavor for secularization by allowing the religious to refuse it, even when the Holy See has granted it, the Superior General has written the executory decree, and the local Superior notifies the person concerned. There is still time for him to pull himself together and preserve the benefits of his religious life... But let us suppose that a religious refuses the inducement presented to him and, six months later, insists on leaving. If there has

been a true renunciation of the inducement, accepted by the superior, he cannot leave the religious state without a new inducement. It is different if he has only hesitated without taking a clear decision*.

The explanation of the reputed canonist is based on an answer of the Sacred Congregation of the religious of August 1, 1922* and it will always be thereafter the practice of this Sacred Congregation to judge it thus. This jurisprudence will be integrated in the new code of canon law which will specify in canon 692:

A discharge inducement, legitimately granted and notified to the member, carries with it the right to be excused from the vows and from all obligations of the profession, unless, at the time of notification, the inducement was refused by the member.

The acceptance of the rescript by the petitioner himself, according to the practice of the Roman Curia and the common opinion of authors, expressed by the fu 4 - Raoul Naz, *Traité de Droit Canonique*, Paris, Lctouzé, 1948, (omc i. no. 907, and article "Rescrit" in *Dictionnaire de Droit Canonique*, Paris. Lctouzé. 1965, col. 617-618).

5 - S. C. of the religious ^response on Pacceprarion of the rescript of secularization and the dispensation

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tur cardinal Pietro Palazzini (who (ùt was undersecretary of the Sacred Congregation for Religious from 1956), must be done in writing:

Secularization becomes effective only when the indultor has accepted the inducement and manifested his acceptance by his signature. For no one is obliged to use the grace that has been granted to him 6 .

It can even be written on the rescript itself when it is submitted.

In order to avoid uncertainty as to whether or not the applicant had accepted, from 1951 onwards, the Sacred Congregation of Religious added to the rescript of the secularization inducement the formula according to which, if within ten days there was no acceptance, there was a presumption of rejection of the inducement, which became worthless⁷ .

The inducement of secularization involves the taking of all the public vows of the religious (canon 640 § 1, 2°):

He who, after the inducement of secularization has been requested, leaves the religious institute... is released from his vows.

Finally, although the rescripts in general can be requested by third parties for the benefit of the beneficiary, the rescript of secularization inducement has this canonical peculiarity that it must be expressly requested by the beneficiary and in a completely free way. It is fundamental to note this. This condition engages the canonical validity of the rescript granted 8 .

The illegitimate exit

The illegitimate exit is done by the dismissal.

In religious congregations of pontifical right and in the case of perpetually professed religious, serious external faults

and incorrigibility are required for such a dismissal to be considered (cf. canon 651 § 1 and Constitutions, article 216).

For these same nuns, this dismissal can only be decided by the Sacred Congregation of Religious (canon 650 § 2, 2°) and not by the Superior General, which is moreover recalled in article 217 of the Constitutions of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus.

6 - Pietro Palazzini, article “Sécularisation” in Dictionnaire de Droit Canonique, Paris Letouzé, 1965, col. 910.

7 - Janusz Kowal s.j.” Uscila definition dall’istuto retigioso dei profesti di voti perpetui, evolont ttorica c disciplina attualc, Rome, Editrice Pontificia Univcrsita Gregoriana 1997, enap. 4, - la >eiolanzzaztonc nel periodo intercodiciale 1917-1983e. p. 142

8 - Pietro Palazzini, ibidem.

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There remains a particular case of dismissal to be examined: the ipso facto dismissal. Canon law foresees that in three particular cases of extremely precise faults the dismissal is ipso facto, that is to say that the simple canonical ascertainment of the offence obligatorily entails the dismissal of the religious (canon 646). These three cases are: 1° public apostasy from the Catholic faith; 2° flight with a man; 3° attempted marriage.

However, one should not confuse public apostasy from the faith with apostasy “a religione” of which canon 644 § 1 speaks, which are two very different canonical realities. The latter means the “abandonment of the religious institute” by

the religious. Apostasy a religione is certainly a serious fault, but it does not entail dismissal ipso facto because it does not include, in its nature, the abandonment of the Catholic faith, which, moreover, puts one outside the Church.

2.3 Leaving the institute and termination of vows

It is important to note that, in the common law of religious, a perpetually professed religious who is dismissed (illegitimately left) from a Congregation of pontifical right remains bound by her vows (canon 669 § 1). However, the approved constitutions of each Congregation may have ruled otherwise (canon 669 § 1). This is the case for the Congregation of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus of Toulouse whose constitutions, in article 218, specify that

the Sister with perpetual vows is released from all her religious vows by canonical dismissal.

As for the inducement of secularization (legitimate exit), as we have said above, it involves the lifting of all the public vows of the nun (canon 640 § 1, 2°).

3. De facto: application of the law to the facts presented 3.1. The Dominican Sisters of Fanjeaux

have never been dismissed from their Congregation.

They have not been dismissed ipso facto.

This is obvious since they do not meet any of the conditions of canon 646 § 1. They have not apostatized from the Catholic faith.

They did not marry a man and they did not run away

Bruges, Abbey of Maredsous, 1951. n'620, noi

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with Our Lord Jesus Christ in their hearts. The facts reproached by the administrator general could certainly be the occasion for a decision of dismissal, but in no case did they constitute a type of fault that could lead to dismissal *ipso facto*.

They have not been the subject of a removal order.

Certainly the Sisters in question were threatened several times by the General Administrator with this possible sanction, because of their obstinate disobedience to her precepts.

However, since the dismissal of such a religious is only possible by a decision of the Sacred Congregation of Religious, it is only a decree of this same Roman Congregation given to each of the religious concerned that could be considered authentic. In fact, and this is a question of natural law, such a decree must be manifested in order to:

1. to inform the nun, who might otherwise be unaware that she is no longer canonically a nun;
2. to present the reasons for the dismissal and thus allow for a possible appeal against this decree to the competent authority.

However, none of the nuns concerned have had any knowledge of such a decree. Therefore, it must be affirmed that canonically it does not exist.

They were never and in no way returned.

Certainly, they had been threatened with it. Then, while we could have expected a decision of the Sacred Congregation for Religious in this sense, nothing came... except a rescript of inducement of secularization according to the norm of canon 640 which has nothing to do with a dismissal. That is why we must absolutely affirm that the nuns concerned, who are still living, still belong to the Congregation of the Dominican Teaching Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus of Toulouse. It is not a probable opinion that we present here, but a canonical certainty.

3.2. The Sacred Congregation of Religious granted the Dominican Sisters of Fanjeaux an inducement to secularize which they never asked for, much less accepted.

Nature of the document of the Sacred Congregation of Religious of June 7, 1976 given to the nuns of Fanjeaux

We are in the presence of a rescript (a word repeated twice in the document) signed by the secretary of the Sacred Congregation of religious. In this rescript, no exposure of fault on the part of the religious is

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present. No possibility of appeal is presented. The only canonical reference giving the reason for the rescript is canon 640, which concerns a gracious request for a secularization inducement. The part of the text of the canon that interests us (640 §1, 1°) is the following:

Qui, impetrato sæcularizationis indulto, religionem relinquit sua religione separatur, habitus eiusdem exteriorum formam debet deponere, et in missa et horis canonicis; in usu et dispensatione sacramentorum sæculanus assimilatur 10 .

canon 640 specifies that there was a request: "Qui impetrato netuknzauoms indulto", that is to say "the one who - after an inducement of presence of" 1 asked We are thus only here in has absolutelyd C in tSraCieUX Tép ° ndmt to a request - " ^ thus constrained. The Sisters J!" "T condemned °" a measure of "being released from their!

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that it returns to him qU ' 3 f you promised by the vow or to prevent Thus, both that n.u j - a dispensation given for a futile cause.

is accnr , - UI j C CC * qUC ** religious to use the dispensation that C is p 0Ur u ^ C | OK sav °lr if there is a sufficient cause to dispense it. In ourr^ 1101 ? rescript must indicate the canonical cause of the dispensation. n °nis 64 q 6 , CaS ' 3 Seu * e rueuôn is the expression used adnormam caonc one must logically leadis that the dispensator has in

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tended to dispense following a legitimate request for secularization by the Sister concerned! How could such a dispensation be valid since, as we shall see in the next point, the Sisters of Fanjeaux did not request it in any way?

Who applied for this armature?

We have seen that, in the particular case of the inducement of secularization of religious, it was required that the voluntary request be made by the beneficiary of the inducement, that is, the religious who would like to be secularized. It is a question of the validity of the inducement 12 . Now there is no doubt that the Sisters have never made such a request explicitly, which, moreover, must be addressed by name to the Holy Father and be given to the Sacred Congregation of Religious.

If not the Sisters: who then would be at the origin of the request in question? It is possible that the General Council of the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus of Toulouse made this request to the Sacred Congregation of religious. Moreover, the General Administrator, in a letter addressed to each of the Sisters, explicitly suggested that they do so (“obviously, you know that you can ask for dispensation from your vows 1 *”). This at least shows that the idea was gaining ground among the leaders of the Congregation. One of the Fanjeaux nuns involved testified in January 2016:

We were told [then] that it was the Congregation that had requested that we be relieved of our vows; can we think that this could be considered as equivalent to a personal request?

But it is quite obvious that this is not at all equivalent. The major superior simply does not have the power to ask for a secularization inducement in the name and place of the

religious. Palazzini reminds us of the possible consequence of a simple moral pressure of a superior on the nun:

The request risks being deprived of any value because it is not made freely.

12 - Pietro Palazzini, art. cit. col. 909.

14 - Letter from Mother Marie-Rose Tassy dated 12 mat 1976.

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And it states:

This consequence is not always sufficiently noticed by the superior who tries by all means to determine an uncooperative subject to ask for his secularization.

Another possible solution would be that the Sacred Congregation of Religious relied on the famous request for “inducement of absenteeism” made in 1975 by the Sisters of Fanjeaux. This had nothing to do with it, of course, but it could have sought to use it as a pretext, at a time when no one, neither in Rome nor in the Congregation, seemed to want to take the decision of a canonical dismissal. The Sacred Congregation of Religious would have perceived this as an implicit request for a secularization inducement. But this request for an inducement of absence, which both Rome and the General Administrator had explicitly refused to grant, is in no way a request for separation from the Institute. It cannot even be compared, according to the canonists, to a request for an inducement of exclaustation which allows the religious to leave her religious institute for a time. As the Roman authority on canon law, Father Felice Cappello, pointed out

Exclaustration is to be distinguished from the “license to remain outside the house” referred to in can. 606 § 2. The former is indeed a separation from the institute, which is not the case with the latter.¹⁶

Even more so, the “absence inducement” must be distinguished from a request for definitive separation from the religious congregation by a secularization inducement which is much more than a simple exclaustration inducement.

In any case, it is clear from all of this that the rescript given on June 7, 1976, is clearly a last resort on the part of the authorities who are trying to resolve a situation that is beyond their control, while not daring to cross the red line by deciding to send them away. Dismissal would certainly be canonically possible, but a somewhat honest conscience could not resolve to do so in the unique case of Sisters who are fleeing their respective communities in order to live in fullness the constitutions to which they have bound themselves by definitive vows. Moreover, when one knows that the Mother General, who had just two years before - through no fault of her own - been de

15 - Pietro Palazzini, *ibidem*.

16 - Felice Cappello s.j., *Summa juris canonici*, Rome, Ed. Pontificiæ Universitaris Grego

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was among the Sisters concerned, one can understand the uneasiness that the Roman authority felt in preparing a decree of dismissal.

So the Sacred Congregation of Religious wanted to turn the difficulty around by issuing an inducement of secularization *suigeneris*, which has the unique characteristic of not explicitly mentioning the request of the Sister, which is always done in the first part of the rescripts of inducement of secularization. The document also fails to recall the right of the Sister to refuse the inducement, which was also the practice of this Roman Congregation since 1951 and a rule that has been respected ever since, even in the new legislation of 1983.

The Sisters of Fanjeaux did not accept to benefit from this inducement.

This is quite normal since they had not asked for it! As it was said above, the concerned nun is not obliged to accept the inducement. It has value only by its manifested acceptance and transmitted to the competent authority on which it depends. It is not difficult to affirm that the Sisters of Fanjeaux, by their writings, words and attitudes, both at the time of receiving this inducement and afterwards, sufficiently proved their intention not to benefit from it.

It must therefore be concluded that the inducement, even if it could have been validly requested, is null and void for lack of formal and canonical acceptance on the part of the beneficiary.

Some might object: "The rescript given to the Sisters makes no mention of the possible rejection, although it has been the custom of the Sacred Congregation of Religious to indicate this at the end of the document since 1951. So the Sacred Congregation of Religious did not give this right to the Sisters concerned. "We must reply that this right of religious was explicitly recalled by the Holy See in 1922. It is therefore part of common law. It cannot be presumed

suppressed by a decree of favor, since such a limitation would be a restriction of the right. Moreover, before 1951, although this right already existed (and explicitly since 1922), it was not recalled in the rescripts. For information, here is how a secularization inducement, in due form (request and answer),¹⁷ was presented to a nun in the 1930s:

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- Beatissime Pater, N.N... (name of the Sister) professa votorum simplicium perpetuorum in N... (name of the religious institute), cum ad onera vitæ religiosæ sustinenda se imparem sentiat, ad pedes S. V. provoluta, humillime implorât indultum sæcularizationis, ut in sæculum libéré ac licite redire valeat. Et Deus, etc 18 .

- Vigore facultatum a SSmo Domino Nostro concessarum, Sacra Congregatio negotiis religiosorum sodalium præposita, benigne commitit, ut oratrici... concedere valeat petitum indultum sæcularizationis ad normam can. 640 § 1, no. 2, ita ut, deposita exteriori forma habitus religiosi, in usu sacramentorum sæcularibus assimiletur, ac maneat liberata a votis ceterisque obligationibus suæ professionis, restituta ei dote, aut servato præscripto can. 643 §2, si casus ferat. Contrariis quibuscumque non obstantibus. Datum Romæ, etc K .

In summary

On June 7, 1976, the Sisters of Fanjeaux received an inducement of secularization of a particular kind which they had never asked for - which is, however, necessary for the validity of the dispensation - and which they had never

accepted - which is, however, also a condition of validity. This inducement can therefore have no legal effect.

3.3 There has never been an intervention by the pope to impose the dispensation of vows.

Contrary to the assertion of the bishop of Carcassonne,²⁰ the pope never intervened to impose the dispensation of vows on the sisters of Fanjeaux.

18 - Most Holy Father, N.N. (name of the Sister); professed of simple perpetual vows in the N... (name of the religious Institute) feeling unable to support the obligations of religious life, humbly prostrated at your feet, asks for the inducement of secularization, in order to

19 - By the faculties given by the Holy Father, the Sacred Congregation of Religious willingly grants the petitioner the inducement of secularization requested in accordance with the norm of canon 640 § 1 n° 2, so that having laid aside the habit of the religious institute she is assimilated to the seculars in the use of the sacraments, and she remains free of her vows and the obligations of her profession, her dowry to be returned to her or in accordance with canon 643 § 2, if the case so requires. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary. Given in Rome on...

cassonne recalls... that the Dominican nuns who came to the Clarté-Dieu of Fanjeaux are no longer Dominicans or nuns, the Pope having imposed on them the dispensation of their vows; [that] the schools opened by them are private schools which depend neither on their former Congregation nor on the Diocesan Direction of Catholic Education (...)"

In itself, the Pope can dispense with all public vows, even solemn ones. He could even impose it in spite of the will of the subject for an extraordinarily grave cause concerning the common good of the Church; this is the common opinion. 11 would then have to act by a special decree because, according to common law, the Sacred Congregation of Religious does not definitively dispense perpetual vows in the name of the Pope *ad nutum* but only either at the request of the religious concerned (induced by secularization) or by confirming the dismissal of a guilty religious from his Congregation.

Now, of such a pontifical decision forcing the return to the lay life - and which therefore could not be by definition in any way an inducement to secularization - there again we have no trace and it is certainly not a simple rescript without the precision of a special mandate and signed by the secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Religious alone that can take its place. We must therefore conclude that the Pope never imposed the dispensation of vows, contrary to the repeated assertions of the bishop of Carcassonne.

We must therefore affirm, in all canonical truth, that, on the one hand, since the Sisters present in July 1976 in Fanjeaux were never dismissed from their Congregation as explained above, and that, on the other hand, since the Pope never imposed a dispensation of their vows as we have just said, the Sisters' vows remain valid even after the events of June 1976.

4. Conclusion

Therefore, all these elements being considered both in law and in fact, it is necessary to declare with certainty that, canonically, the professed Sisters of the Congregation of the Dominican Teaching Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus of

Toulouse, who received the above-mentioned rescript of the Sacred Congregation of Religious on June 7, 1976, still belong to this religious institute and are still bound by their public vows of religion pronounced in this same institute.

On the day of the purification of the Blessed Virgin in Paris, February 2, 2016.

Father Denis Puga of the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Pius X
Former professor of Canon Law (1996 to 2008) at the
International Seminary of Saint Pius X in Ecône

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BREAKUP or FIDELITY

The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) gave the history of the Church of the XX century its dominant note, and projected the life of Catholics throughout the world the reflection of its discussions. This Council committed the Church to the path of dialogue with the modern world.

As a result, religious congregations were faced with unprecedented choices. The new society, and the new responses that the Church was giving to it, all of this upset the traditional conceptions of religious life and of Catholic teaching. The Dominican teaching sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus, like all religious women, could not remain aloof from the reflections that these upheavals gave rise to. As a result, they wrote the history of their congregation in the midst of what has been called the “crisis of the Church”.

In this turmoil, their Mother General once addressed these words to the bishops: “When we appear before the Lord, I will have to answer only for myself, for my government during this torn and heart-rending time, and for the service of the souls of the children who have been entrusted to us. I may answer that I voluntarily sacrificed children’s souls only out of obedience to this or that diocesan director, but I will

be no less guilty and nothing and no one will help me to justify my complicity... In spite of all that separates us, I repeat to you. Your Excellency, my will to serve only Jesus Christ, even in your diocese... With the certainty that the Lord who suffered and who suffers in each one of us, through us, with us and for us, is definitively risen, I pray that this painful passion that the Church is going through at the present time will lead to the life, the light and the truth that is the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is the echo of this struggle and this heartbreak that the pages of this book would like to make heard.

Sister Alice-Marie is a member of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus of Fanjeaux, where she made her perpetual vows in 2005. She holds a doctorate and published her thesis, published by Privât, which retraced the history of this congregation from 1800 to 1948. The present work is a continuation of this first work, which it extends by evoking the more recent years, from 1948 to 1975.

ISBN 978-2-35005-132-1